









TRAPPINA PORTE.

DRAMA OF EXILE:

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

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A VISION OF POETS. 14

"O Sacred Essence, lighting me this hour, How may I lightly stile thy great power?

Echo. Power.

Power! but of whence? under the greenwood spraye? Or liv'st in Heaven? saye.

Echo. in Heavens aye.

In Heavens aye! tell, may I it obtayne
By alms, by fasting, prayer,—by paine?

Echo.
By paine.

Show me the paine, it shall be undergone:

I to mine end will still go on.

Echo. Go on."

BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS.

A VISION OF POETS.

A POET could not sleep aright,

For his soul kept up too much light

Under his eyelids for the night:

And thus he rose disquieted,
With sweet rhymes ringing through his head,
And in the forest wandered;

Where, sloping up the darkest glades, The moon had drawn long colonnades, Upon whose floor the verdure fades

To a faint silver: pavement fair,

The antique Dryads scarce would dare

To footprint o'er, if such were there,

But rather sit by breathlessly,
With tears in their large eyes to see
The consecrated sight. But HE—

The poet—who with spirit-kiss Familiar, had long claimed for his Whatever earthly beauty is,

Who also in his spirit bore

A Beauty passing the earth's store,
Walked calmly onward evermore.

His aimless thoughts in metre went, Like a babe's hand, without intent, Drawn down a seven-stringed instrument.

Nor jarred it with his mood whenas, With a faint stirring with the grass, An apparition fair did pass.

He might have feared another time,
But all things fair and strange did chime
With his thoughts then—as rhyme to rhyme.

An angel had not startled him,
Dropping from Heaven's encyclic rim
To breathe from glory in the Dim--

Much less a lady, riding slow
Upon a palfrey white as snow,
As smooth as a snow-cloud could go.

Full upon his she turned her face,—
"What, ho, sir poet! dost thou pace
Our woods at night, in ghostly chase

"Of some fair Dryad of old tales, Who chants between the nightingales, And over sleep by song prevails?"

She smiled; but he could see arise Her soul from far adown her eyes, Prepared as if for sacrifice.

She looked a queen who seemeth gay From royal grace alone: "Now, nay," He answered,—"slumber passed away, Compelled by instincts in my head, That I should see to-night instead Of a fair nymph, some fairer Dread."

She looked up quickly to the sky
And spake:—"The moon's regality
Will hear no praise! she is as I.

"She is in heaven, and I on earth; This is my kingdom—I come forth To crown all poets to their worth."

He brake in with a voice that mourned—
"To their worth, lady! They are scorned
By men they sing for, till inurned.

"To their worth! Beauty in the mind Leaves the hearth cold; and love-refined Ambitions make the world unkind.

"The boor who ploughs the daisy down,
The chief, whose mortgage of renown,
Fixed upon graves, has bought a crown—

"Both these are happier, more approved Than poets!—Why should I be moved In saying both are more beloved?"

"The south can judge not of the north;"
She resumed calmly—"I come forth
To crown all poets to their worth.

"Yea, sooth! and to anoint them all With blessed oils, which surely shall Smell sweeter as the ages fall."

"As sweet," the poet said, and rung

A low sad laugh, "as flowers do, sprung

Out of their graves when they die young!

"As sweet as window eglantine— Some bough of which, as they decline, The hired nurse plucketh at their sign!

"As sweet, in short, as perfumed shroud, Which the fair Roman maidens sewed For English Keats, singing aloud." The lady answered, "Yea, as sweet!

The things thou namest being complete
In fragrance, as I measure it.

"Since sweet the death-clothes and the knell Of him who, having lived, dies well,— And holy sweet the asphodel,

"Stirred softly by that foot of his, When he treads brave on all that is, Into the world of souls, from this!

"Since sweet the tears, dropped at the door Of tearless Death,—and even before: Sweet, consecrated evermore!

"What! dost thou judge it a strange thing, That poets, crowned for conquering, Should bear some dust from out the ring?

"Come on with me, come on with me;
And learn in coming! Let me free
Thy spirit into verity."

She ceased: her palfrey's paces sent
No separate noises as she went,—
'Twas a bee's hum—a little spent.

And while the poet seemed to tread Along the drowsy noise so made, The forest heaved up overhead

Its billowy foliage through the air,
And the calm stars did, far and fair,
O'er-swim the masses everywhere:

Save where the overtopping pines

Did bar their tremulous light with lines

All fixed and black. Now the moon shines

A broader glory! You may see

The trees grow rarer presently,—

The air blows up more fresh and free:

Until they come from dark to light,

And from the forest to the sight

Of the large Heaven-heart, bare with night,—

A fiery throb in every star,
With burning arteries that are
The conduits of God's life afar,—

A wild brown moorland underneath,

Low glimmering here and thither, with

White pools in breaks, as blank as death.

Beside the first pool, near the wood,

A dead tree in set horror stood,

Peeled and disjointed, stark as rood;

Since thunder-stricken, years ago,

Fixed in the spectral strain and throe

Wherewith it struggled from the blow:

A monumental tree . . . alone,

That will not bend, if tempest-blown,
But break off sudden like a stone,—

Its lifeless shadow lies oblique Upon the pool,—where, javelin-like, The star-rays quiver while they strike.

- "Drink," said the lady, very still—
- "Be holy and cold." He did her will, And drank the starry water chill.

The next pool they came near unto, Was bare of trees: there, only grew Straight flags and lilies fair to view,

Which sullen on the water sat, And leant their faces on the flat, As weary of the starlight-state.

"Drink," said the lady, grave and slow,
"World's use behooveth thee to know."

He drank the bitter wave below.

The third pool, girt with thorny bushes,
And flaunting weeds, and reeds and rushes
That winds sang through in mournful gushes,

Was whitely smeared in many a round By a slow slime: the starlight swound Over the ghastly light it found. "Drink," said the lady, sad and slow—
"World's love behooveth thee to know."

He looked to her, commanding so.

He drank the water suddenly,—

Then, with a deathly sickness, passed Beside the fourth pool and the last, Where weights of shadow were down-cast

From yew and cypress, and from trails Of hemlock clasping the trunk-scales, And flung across the intervals

From yew to yew. Who dareth stoop Where those moist branches overdroop Into his heart the chill strikes up:

He hears a silent, gliding coil—
The snakes breathe hard against the soil—
His foot slips in their slimy oil:

And toads seem crawling on his hand, And clinging bats, but dimly scanned, Right in his face their wings expand.

A paleness took the poet's cheek;
"Must I drink here?" he questioned meek
The lady's will, with utterance weak.

"Ay, ay," she said, "it so must be"—
(And this time she spake cheerfully)
"Behooves thee know world's cruelty."

He bowed his forehead till his mouth Curved in the wave, and drank unloth, As if from rivers of the south.

His lips sobbed through the water rank,
His heart paused in him while he drank,
His brain beat heart-like—rose and sank,—

And he swooned backward to a dream, Wherein he lay 'twixt gloom and gleam, With Death and Life at each extreme. And spiritual thunders, born of soul Not cloud, did leap from mystic pole, And o'er him roll and counter-roll,

Crushing their echoes reboant
With their own wheels. Did Heaven so grant
His spirit a sign of covenant?

At last came silence. A slow kiss Did crown his forehead after this: His eyelids flew back for the bliss.

The lady stood beside his head, Smiling a thought, with hair dispread! The moonshine seemed dishevelled

In her sleek tresses manifold;
Like Danae's in the rain of old,
That dripped with melancholy gold!

But she was holy, pale, and high—As one who saw an ecstasy
Beyond a foretold agony.

"Rise up!" said she, with voice where song Eddied through speech—"rise up! be strong; And learn how right avengeth wrong,"

The poet rose up on his feet:

He stood before an altar set

For sacrament, with vessels meet,

And mystic altarlights which shine

As if their flames were crystalline

Carved flames that would not shrink or pine.

The altar filled the central place
Of a great church, and toward its face
Long aisles did shoot and interlace.

And from it a continuous mist
Of incense (round the edges kissed
By a pure light of amethyst)

Wound upward slowly and throbbingly, Cloud within cloud, right silverly, Cloud above cloud, victoriously, Broke full against the arched roof,
And, thence refracting, eddied off,
And floated through the marble woof

Of many a fine-wrought architrave,— Then, poising the white masses brave, Swept solemnly down aisle and nave.

And now in dark, and now in light,

The countless columns, glimmering white,

Seemed leading out to Infinite.

Plunged half-way up the shaft they showed, In the pale shifting incense-cloud Which flowed them by, and overflowed,

Till mist and marble seemed to blend,
And the whole temple, at the end,
With its own incense to distend;

The arches, like a giant's bow,

To bend and slacken,—and below,

The niched saints to come and go.

Alone, amid the shifting scene, 'That central altar stood serene
In its clear steadfast taper-sheen.

Then first, the poet was aware Of a chief angel standing there Before that altar, in the glare.

His eyes were dreadful, for you saw That *they* saw God—his lips and jaw, Grand-made and strong, as Sinai's Law

They could enunciate, and refrain

From vibratory after-pain;

And his brows height was sovereign—

On the vast background of his wings

Arose his image! and he flings,

From each plumed arc, pale glitterings

And fiery flakes (as beateth more Or less, the angel-heart!) before, And round him, upon roof and floor, Edging with fire the shifting fumes:
While at his side, 't wixt lights and glooms,
The phantasm of an organ booms.

Extending from which instrument And angel, right and left-way bent, The poet's sight grew sentient

Of a strange company around

And toward the altar,—pale and crowned,

With sovran eyes of depth profound.

Deathful their faces were; and yet

The power of life was in them set—

Never forgót, nor to forget.

Sublime significance of mouth,
Dilated nostril full of youth,
And forehead royal with the truth.

These faces were not multiplied Beyond your count, but side by side Did front the altar, glorified; Still as a vision, yet exprest
Full as an action—look and geste
Of buried saint, in risen rest!

The poet knew them. Faint and dim His spirit seemed to sink in him, Then, like a dolphin, change and swim

The current—These were poets true
Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do
For Truth—the ends being scarcely two.

God's prophets of the Beautiful These poets were—of iron rule, The rugged cilix, serge of wool.

Here, Homer, with the broad suspense Of thunderous brows, and lips intense Of garrulous god-innocence.

There, Shakspeare! on whose forehead climb

The crowns o' the world! Oh, eyes sublime—

With tears and laughters for all time!

Here, Æschylus,—the women swooned
To see so awful when he frowned
As the gods did,—he standeth crowned.

Euripides, with close and mild Scholastic lips,—that could be wild, And laugh or sob out like a child

Right in the classes. Sophocles,
With that king's look which down the trees,
Followed the dark effigies

Of the lost Theban! Hesiod old, Who somewhat blind, and deaf and cold, Cared most for gods and bulls! and bold

Electric Pindar, quick as fear,
With race-dust on his cheeks, and clear,
Slant startled eyes that seem to hear

The chariot rounding the last goal,
To hurtle past it in his soul!
And Sappho crowned with aureole

Of ebon curls on calmed brows—
O poet-woman! none forgoes
The leap, attaining the repose!

Theocritus, with glittering locks,
Dropt sideway, as betwixt the rocks
He watched the visionary flocks!

And Aristophanes! who took

The world with mirth, and laughter-struck

The hollow caves of Thought and woke

The infinite echoes hid in each.

And Virgil! shade of Mantuan beech

Did help the shade of bay to reach

And knit around his forehead high!—

For his gods wore less majesty

Than his brown bees hummed deathlessly.

Lucretius—nobler than his mood!

Who dropped his plummet down the broad

Deep universe, and said 'No God,'

Finding no bottom! he denied Divinely the Divine, and died Chief poet on the Tiber-side,

By grace of God! his face is stern, As one compelled, in spite of scorn, To teach a truth he could not learn.

And Ossian, dimly seen or guessed!

Once counted greater than the rest,

When mountain-winds blew out his vest.

And Spenser drooped his dreaming head (With languid sleep-smile you had said From his own verse engendered)

On Ariosto's, till they ran

Their locks in one!—The Italian

Shot nimbler heat of bolder man

From his fine lids. And Dante stern And sweet, whose spirit was an urn For wine and milk poured out in turn. Hard-souled Alfieri; and fancy-willed Boiardo,—who with laughters filled The pauses of the jostled shield.

And Berni, with a hand stretched out To sleek that storm! And not without The wreath he died in, and the doubt

He died by, Tasso! bard and lover, Whose visions were too thin to cover The face of a false woman over.

And soft Racine,—and grave Corneille—
The orator of rhymes, whose wail
Scarce shook his purple! And Petrarch pale,

Who from his brainlit heart hath thrown A thousand thoughts beneath the sun, Each perfumed with the name of One.

And Camoens, with that look he had, Compelling India's Genius sad From the wave through the Lusiad, With murmurs of a purple ocean

Indrawn in vibrative emotion

Along the verse! And while devotion

In his wild eyes fantastic shone
Between the bright curls blown upon
By airs celestial, . . Calderon!

And bold De Vega,—who breathed quick Song after song, till death's old trick Put pause to life and rhetoric.

And Goethe—with that reaching eye His soul reached out from, far and high, And fell from inner entity.

And Schiller, with heroic front
Worthy of Plutarch's kiss upon 't—
Too large for wreath of modern wont.

And Chaucer, with his infantine Familiar clasp of things divine— That mark upon his lip is wine. Here Milton's eyes strike piercing-dim!

The shapes of suns and stars did swim

Like clouds from them, and granted him

God for sole vision! Cowley, there, Whose active fancy debonaire Drew straws like amber—foul to fair.

Drayton and Browne,—with smiles they drew From outward Nature, to renew From their own inward nature true.

And Marlowe, Webster, Fletcher, Ben—Whose fire-heart sowed our furrows, when The world was worthy of such men.

And Burns, with pungent passionings Set in his eyes. Deep lyric springs Are of the fire-mount's issuings.

And Shelley, in his white ideal,
All statue-blind; and Keats, the real
Adonis, with the hymeneal

Fresh vernal buds half sunk between His youthful curls, kissed straight and sheen In his Rome-grave, by Venus queen.

And poor, proud Byron,—sad as grave
And salt as life! forlornly brave,
And quivering with the dart he drave.

And visionary Coleridge, who
Did sweep his thoughts as angels do
Their wings, with cadence up the Blue.

These poets faced (and other more)
The lighted altar booming o'er
The clouds of incense dim and hoar:

And all their faces, in the lull
Of natural things, looked wonderful
With life and death and deathless rule!

All still as stone, and yet intense;
As if by spirit's vehemence
That stone were carved, and not by sense.

All still and calm as statue-stone!

The life lay coiled unforgone

Up in the awful eyes alone,

And flung its length out through the air Into whatever eyes should dare To front them—Awful shapes and fair!

But where the heart of each should beat,

There seemed a wound instead of it,

From whence the blood dropped to their feet,

Drop after drop—dropped heavily, As century follows century Into the deep eternity.

Then said the lady,—and her word

Came distant,—as wide waves were stirred

Between her and the ear that heard:—

"World's use is cold—world's love is vain,— World's cruelty is bitter bane; But pain is not the fruit of pain.

- "Hearken, O poet, whom I led From the dark wood! Dismissing dread, Now hear this angel in my stead:
- "His organ's pedals strike along
 These poets' hearts, which metal-strong,
 They gave him without count of wrong,—
- "From which foundation he can guide Up to God's feet, from these who died, An anthem fully glorified!
- "Whereat God's blessing IBARAK (קברך)
 Breathes back this music—folds it back
 About the earth in vapoury rack:
- "And men walk in it, crying 'Lo!
- 'The world is wider, and we know
- 'The very heavens look brighter so!
- " 'The stars walk statelier round the edge
- 'O' the silver spheres, and give in pledge
- 'Their light for nobler privilege.

- "'No little flower but joys or grieves-
- 'Full life is rustling in the sheaves;
- 'Full spirit sweeps the forest-leaves!'
- "So works this music on the earth!
 God so admits it, sends it forth,
 To add another worth to worth—
- "A new creation-bloom that rounds The old creation, and expounds His Beautiful in tuneful sounds.
- "Now hearken!" Then the poet gazed Upon the angel glorious-faced, Whose hand, majestically raised,

Floated across the organ-keys,

Like a pale moon o'er murmuring seas,

With no touch but with influences.

Then rose and fell (with swell and swound
Of shapeless noises wandering round
A concord which at last they found)

Those mystic keys—the tones were mixed, Dim, faint; and thrilled and throbbed betwixt The incomplete and the unfixed:

And therein mighty minds were heard In mighty musings, inly stirred, And struggling outward for a word.

Until these surges, having run

This way and that, gave out as one

An Aphrodite of sweet tune,—

A Harmony that, finding vent,
Upward in grand ascension went,
Winged to a heavenly argument—

Up, upward! like a saint who strips
The shroud back from his eyes and lips,
And rises in apocalypse!

A Harmony sublime and plain,
Which cleft (as flying swan, the rain,—
Throwing the drops off with a strain

Of her white wings) those undertones Of perplext chords, and soared at once, And struck out from the starry thrones

Their several silver octaves, as
It passed to God! The music was
Of divine stature—strong to pass!

And those who heard it, understood

Something of life in spirit and blood—

Something of Nature's fair and good.

And while it sounded, those great souls
Did thrill as racers at the goals,
And burn in all their aureoles.

But she, the lady, as vapour-bound, Stood calmly in the joy of sound,— Like nature with the showers around.

And when it ceased, the blood which fell,
Again, alone grew audible,
Tolling the silence as a bell.

The sovran angel lifted high
His hand and spake out sovranly—
"Tried poets, hearken and reply!

"Give me true answers. If we grant That not to suffer, is to want The conscience of the Jubilant,—

"If ignorance of anguish is

But ignorance; and mortals miss

Far prospects, by a level bliss,—

"If as two colours must be viewed In a seen image, mortals should Need good and evil, to see good,—

" If to speak nobly, comprehends

To feel profoundly—if the ends

Of power and suffering, Nature, blends,—

"If poets on the tripod must
Writhe like the Pythian, to make just
Their oracles, and merit trust,—

"If every vatic word that sweeps

To change the world, must pale their lips,

And leave their own souls in eclipse—

"If to search deep the universe

Must pierce the searcher with the curse,—

Because that bolt (in man's reverse,)

"Was shot to the heart o' the wood, and lies Wedged deepest in the best!—if eyes That look for visions and surprise

"From marshalled angels, must shut down Their lids, first, upon sun and moon, The head asleep upon a stone,—

"If ONE who did redeem you back, By His own lack, from final lack, Did consecrate by touch and track

"Those temporal sorrows, till the taste
Of brackish waters of the waste
Is salt with tears He dropt too fast,—

"If all the crowns of earth must wound With prickings of the thorns He found,—
If saddest sighs swell sweetest sound,—

"What say ye unto this?—refuse
This baptism in salt water?—choose
Calm breasts, mute lips, and labour loose?

"Or, oh ye gifted givers! ye Who give your liberal hearts to me, To make the world this harmony,—

Are ye resigned that they be spent To such world's help?"—

The Spirits bent

Their awful brows and said-"Content!"

Content! it sounded like Amen,
Said by a choir of mourning men—
An affirmation full of pain

And patience !—ay, of glorying,
And adoration,—as a king
Might seal an oath for governing.

Then said the angel—and his face
Lightened abroad, until the place
Grew larger for a moment's space,—

The long aisles flashing out in light,

And nave and transept, columns white,

And arches crossed, being clear to sight,

As if the roof were off, and all Stood in the noon-sun,—"Lo! I call To other hearts as liberal.

"This pedal strikes out in the air! My instrument hath room to bear Still fuller strains and perfecter.

"Herein is room, and shall be room While Time lasts, for new hearts to come Consummating while they consume.

"What living man will bring a gift

Of his own heart, and help to lift

The tune?—The race is to the swift!"

So asked the angel. Straight the while,
A company came up the aisle
With measured step and sorted smile;

Cleaving the incense-clouds that rise,
With winking unaccustomed eyes,
And love-locks smelling sweet of spice.

One bore his head above the rest,

As if the world were dispossessed—

And one did pillow chin on breast,

Right languid—an as he should faint!

One shook his curls across his paint,

And moralized on worldly taint.

One, slanting up his face, did wink
The salt rheum to the eyelid's brink,
To think—O gods! or—not to think!

Some trod out stealthily and slow, As if the sun would fall in snow, If they walked to, instead of fro. And some with conscious ambling free, Did shake their bells right daintily On hand and foot, for harmony.

And some composing sudden sighs, In attitudes of point-device, Rehearsed impromptu agonies.

And when this company drew near The spirits crowned, it might appear Submitted to a ghastly fear.

As a sane eye in master-passion Constrains a maniac to the fashion Of hideous maniac imitation

In the least geste—the dropping low
O' the lid—the wrinkling of the brow,—
Exaggerate with mock and mow,—

So, mastered was that company By the crowned vision utterly, Swayed to a maniac mockery. One dulled his eyeballs, as they ached
With Homer's forehead—though he lacked
An inch of any! And one racked

His lower lip with restless tooth,—
As Pindar's rushing words forsooth
Were pent behind it, One, his smooth

Pink cheeks, did rumple passionate, Like Æschylus—and tried to prate On trolling tongue, of fate and fate!

One set her eyes like Sappho's—or Any light woman's! one forbore Like Dante, or any man as poor

In mirth, to let a smile undo
His hard shut lips. And one, that drew
Sour humours from his mother, blew

His sunken cheeks out to the size
Of most unnatural jollities,
Because Anacreon looked jest-wise.

So with the rest.—It was a sight For great world-laughter, as it might For great world-wrath, with equal right!

Out came a speaker from that crowd,
To speak for all—in sleek and proud
Exordial periods, while he bowed

His knee before the angel—" Thus,
O angel, who hast called for us,
We bring thee service emulous,—

"Fit service from sufficient soul— Hand-service, to receive world's dole— Lip-service, in world's ear to roll

"Adjusted concords—soft enow

To hear the wine cups passing, through,
And not too grave to spoil the show.

"Thou, certes, when thou askest more,
O sapient angel, leanest o'er
The window-sill of metaphor.

"To give our hearts up! fie!—That rage Barbaric, antedates the age! It is not done on any stage.

"Because your scald or gleeman went With seven or nine-stringed instrument Upon his back—must ours be bent?

"We are not pilgrims, by your leave, No, nor yet martyrs! if we grieve, It is to rhyme to . . . summer eve.

"And if we labour, it shall be As suiteth best with our degree, In after-dinner reverie."

More yet that speaker would have said,—Poising between his smiles fair fed,
Each separate phrase till finished;

But all the foreheads of those born

And dead true poets flushed with scorn

Betwixt the bay leaves round them worn—

Ay, jetted such brave fire, that they,
The new-come, shrank and paled away,
Like leaden ashes when the day

Strikes on the hearth! A spirit-blast,

A presence known by power, at last

Took them up mutely—they had passed!

And he, our pilgrim-poet, saw
Only their places, in deep awe,—
What time the angel's smile did draw

His gazing upward. Smiling on, The angel in the angel shone, Revealing glory in benizon.

Till, ripened in the light which shut The poet in, his spirit mute Dropped sudden, as a perfect fruit.

He fell before the angel's feet, Saying—"If what is true is sweet, In something I may compass it.

- "For where my worthiness is poor, My will stands richly at the door, To pay short comings evermore.
- "Accept me therefore—Not for price,
 And not for pride my sacrifice
 Is tendered! for my soul is nice,
- "And will beat down those dusty seeds
 Of bearded corn, if she succeeds
 In soaring while the covey feeds.
- "I soar—I am drawn up like the lark
 To its white cloud! So high my mark,
 Albeit my wing is small and dark!
- "I ask no wages—seek no fame! Sew me, for shroud round face and name, God's banner of the oriflamme.
- "I only would have leave to loose (In tears and blood, if so He choose) Mine inward music out to use.

"I only would be spent—in pain And loss, perchance—but not in vain, Upon the sweetness of that strain,—

"Only project, beyond the bound Of mine own life, so lost and found, My voice, and live on in its sound,—

"Only embrace and be embraced By fiery ends,—whereby to waste, And light God's future with my past!

The angel's smile grew more divine—
The mortal speaking—ay, its shine
Swelled fuller, like a choir-note fine,

Till the broad gloriole, round his brow, Did vibrate with the light below; But what he said I do not know.

Nor know I if the man who prayed,

Rose up accepted, unforbade,

From the church-floor where he was laid,—

Nor if a listening life did run

Through the king-poets, glossing down

Their eyes capacious of renown.

My soul, which saw these things, was blind By what it looked on! I can find No certain count of things behind.

I saw alone, dim white and grand

As in a dream, the angel's hand

Stretched forth in gesture of command,

Straight through the haze—And so, as erst,
A strain, more noble than the first,
Mused in the organ, and outburst.

With giant march, from floor to roof,
Rose the full notes; now parted off
In pauses massively aloof,

Like measured thunders; now rejoined In concords of mysterious kind, Which won together sense and mind! Now flashing sharp on sharp along, Exultant, in a mounting throng,— Now dying off into a song

Fed upon minors,—starry sounds

Moved on free-paced, in silver rounds,

Enlarging liberty with bounds.

And every rhythm that seemed to close, Survived in confluent underflows, Symphonious with the next that rose:

Thus the whole strain being multiplied And greatened,—with its glorified Wings shot abroad from side to side,—

Waved backwards (as a wind might wave

A Brochen mist, and with as brave

Wild roaring) arch and architrave,

Aisle, transept, column, marble wall,—
Then swelling outward, prodigal
Of aspiration beyond thrall.

Soared,—and drew up with it the whole
Of this sad vision—as a soul
Is raised by a thought! and as a roll

Of bright devices is unrolled Still upward, with a gradual gold,— So rose the vision manifold,

Angel and organ, and the round
Of spirits, solemnized and crowned,—
While the freed clouds of incense wound

Ascending, following in their track,

And glimmering faintly, like the rack

O' the moon, in her own light cast back.

And as that solemn Dream withdrew, The lady's kiss did fall anew Cold on the poet's brow as dew.

And that same kiss which bound him first Beyond the senses, now reversed Its own law, and most subtly pierced His spirit with the sense of things Sensual and present. Vanishings Of glory, with Æolian wings

Struck him and passed: the lady's face Did melt back in the chrysopras Of the orient morning sky that was

Yet clear of lark,—and there and so She melted, as a star might do, Still smiling as she melted—slow!

Smiling so slow, he seemed to see Her smile the last thing, gloriously, Beyond her—far as memory!

Then he looked round: he was alone—
He lay before the breaking sun,
As Jacob at the Bethel stone.

And thought's entangled skein being wound, He knew the moorland of his swound, And the pale pools that seared the ground,— The far wood-pines, like offing ships—
The fourth pool's yew anear him drips—
World's cruelty attaints his lips;

And still he tastes it—bitter still— Through all that glorious possible He had the sight of! present ill!

Yet rising calmly up and slowly, With such a cheer as scorneth folly, And mild delightsome melancholy,

He journeyed homeward through the wood, And prayed along the solitude, Betwixt the pines,—"O God, my God!"

The golden morning's open flowings

Did sway the trees to murmurous bowings,—

In metric chant of blessed poems.

And passing homeward through the wood, He prayed along the solitude,— "Thou, Poet-God, art great and good! "And though we must have, and have had Right reason to be earthly sad,— Тноυ, Poet-God, art great and glad."

CONCLUSION.

Life treads on life, and heart on heart— We press too close in church and mart, To keep a dream or grave apart.

And I was 'ware of walking down

That same green forest where had gone

The poet-pilgrim. One by one

I traced his footsteps! From the east

A red and tender radiance pressed

Through the near trees, until I guessed

The sun behind shone full and round;
While up the leafiness profound
A wind scarce old enough for sound,

Stood ready to blow on me when
I turned that way; and now and then
The birds sang and brake off again

To shake their pretty feathers dry Of dew which slideth droppingly From the leaf-edges, and apply

Back to their song. 'Twixt dew and bird' So sweet a silence ministered, God seemed to use it for a word.

Yet morning souls did leap and run In all things, as the least had won A joyous insight of the sun.

And no one looking round the wood Could help confessing, as he stood,

This Poet-God is glad and good!

But hark! a distant sound that grows!

A heaving, sinking of the boughs—

A rustling murmur, not of those

A breezy noise, which is not breeze! And white-clad children by degrees Steal out in troops among the trees;

Fair little children, morning-bright,
With faces grave, yet soft to sight,—
Expressive of restrained delight.

Some plucked the palm-boughs within reach,
And others leapt up high to catch
The upper boughs, and shake from each

A rain of dew, till, wetted so,

The child who held the branch let go,

And it swang backward with a flow

Of faster drippings. Then I knew
The children laughed—but the laugh flew
From its own chirrup, as might do

A frightened song-bird; and a child Who seemed the chief, said very mild, "Hush! keep this morning undefiled." His eyes rebuked them from calm spheres; His soul upon his brow appears In waiting for more holy years.

I called the child to me, and said,
"What are your palms for ?"—"To be spread,"
He answered, "on a poet dead.

"The poet died last month; and now The world, which had been somewhat slow, In honouring his living brow,

"Commands the palms—They must be strown On his new marble very soon, In a procession of the town."

I sighed and said, "Did he foresee Any such honour?" "Verily I cannot tell you," answered he.

"But this I know,—I fain would lay Mine own head down, another day, As he did,—with the fame away. "A lily, a friend's hand had plucked,
Lay by his death-bed, which he looked
As deep down as a bee had sucked;

"Then, turning to the lattice, gazed O'er hill and river, and upraised His eyes, illumined and amazed

"With the world's beauty, up to God, Re-offering on his iris broad, The images of things bestowed

"By the chief Poet,—'God!' he cried,
'Be praised for anguish, which has tried;
For beauty, which has satisfied:—

"'For this world's presence, half within And half without me—sound and scene—This sense of Being and Having been.

"'I thank Thee that my soul hath room

For Thy grand world! Both guests may come—

Beauty, to soul—Body, to tomb!

"'I am content to be so weak,—
Put strength into the words I speak,
And I am strong in what I seek.

"'I am content to be so bare
Before the archers! everywhere
My wounds being stroked by heavenly air.

"'I laid my soul before Thy feet, That Images of fair and sweet Should walk to other men on it.

"'I am content to feel the step
Of each pure Image!—let those keep
To mandragore, who care to sleep.

"'I am content to touch the brink
Of the other goblet, and I think
My bitter drink a wholesome drink.

"'Because my portion was assigned Wholesome and bitter—Thou art kind, And I am blessed to my mind.

"'Gifted for giving, I receive
The maythorn, and its scent outgive!
I grieve not that I once did grieve.

"'In my large joy of sight and touch Beyond what others count for such, I am content to suffer much.

"'I know—is all the mourner saith,— Knowledge by suffering entereth; And Life is perfected by Death!'"

The child spake nobly. Strange to hear,

His infantine soft accents clear,

Charged with high meanings, did appear,—

And fair to see, his form and face,—
Winged out with whiteness and pure grace
From the green darkness of the place.

Behind his head a palm-tree grew;

An orient beam, which pierced it through,

Transversely on his forehead drew

The figure of a palm-branch brown, Traced on its brightness, up and down In fine fair lines,—a shadow-crown.

Guido might paint his angels so—
A little angel, taught to go,
With holy words to saints below.

Such innocence of action yet
Significance of object met
In his whole bearing strong and sweet.

And all the children, the whole band, Did round in rosy reverence stand, Each with a palm-bough in his hand.

"And so he died," I whispered;—"Nay, Not so," the childish voice did say—
"That poet turned him, first, to pray

"In silence; and God heard the rest,
"Twixt the sun's fcotsteps down the west.
Then he called one who loved him best,

"Yea, he called softly through the room (His voice was weak yet tender)—'Come,' He said, 'come nearer! Let the bloom

"' Of Life grow over, undenied,
This bridge of Death, which is not wide—
I shall be soon at the other side.

"'Come, kiss me!' So the one in truth
Who loved him best—in love, not ruth,
Bowed down and kissed him mouth to mouth.

"And, in that kiss of Love, was won
Life's manumission! All was done—
The mouth that kissed last, kissed alone!

"But in the former, confluent kiss,
The same was sealed, I think, by His,
To words of truth and uprightness."

The child's voice trembled—his lips shook, Like a rose leaning o'er a brook, Which vibrates, though it is not struck. "And who," I asked, a little moved, Yet curious-eyed, "was this that loved And kissed him last, as it behooved?"

- "I," softly said the child; and then,
- "I," said he louder, once again.
- "His son,-my rank is among men.
- "And now that men exalt his name, I come to gather palms with them, That holy Love may hallow Fame.
- "He did not die alone; nor should His memory live so, 'mid these rude World-praisers—a worse solitude.
- "Me, a voice calleth to that tomb,
 Where these are strewing branch and bloom,
 Saying, come nearer!—and I come.
- "Glory to God!" resumed he,

 And his eyes smiled for victory

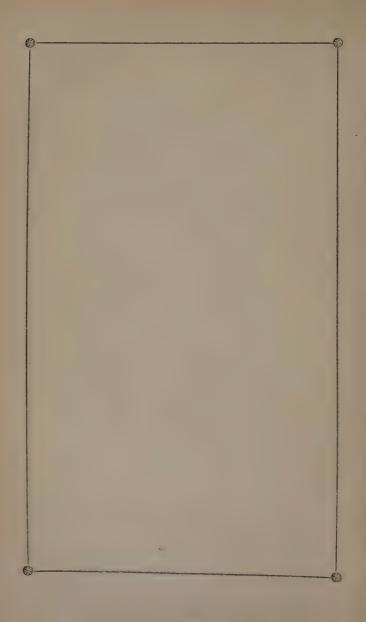
 O'er their own tears, which I could see

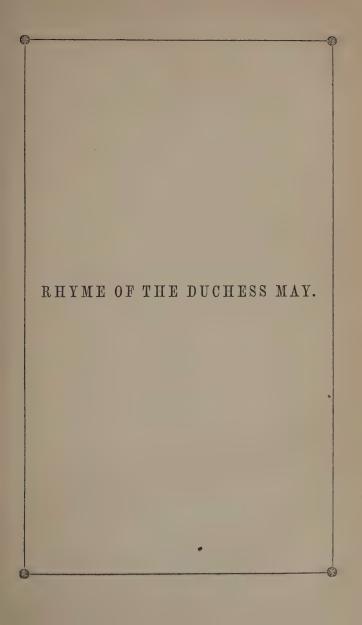
Fallen on the palm, down cheek and chin—
"That poet now hath entered in
The place of rest which is not sin.

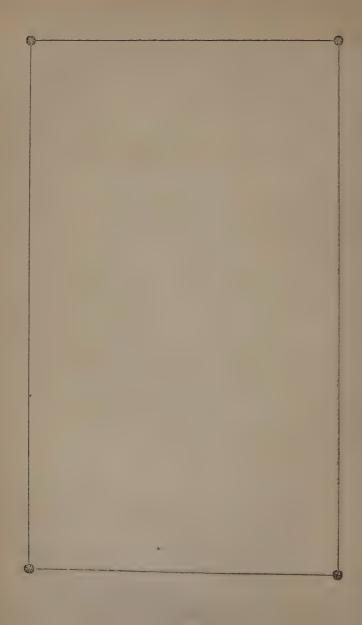
"And while he rests, his songs, in troops, Walk up and down our earthly slopes, Companioned by diviner Hopes."

"But thou," I murmured,—to engage
The child's speech farther—"hast an age
Too tender for this orphanage."

"Glory to God—to God!" he saith—
"Knowledge by suffering entereth;
And Life is perfected by Death!"







RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

In the belfry, one by one, went the ringers from the sun,—

Toll slowly!

And the oldest ringer said, "Ours is music for the Dead,

When the rebecks are all done."

Six abeiles i' the kirkyard grow, on the northside in a row,—

Toll slowly!

And the shadows of their tops, rock across the little slopes

Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in haste,—

And between the river flowing, and the fair green trees a growing,

Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sat that day, up against a willow gray:—

Toll slowly!

Through the rain of willow-branches, I could see the low hill-ranges,

And the river on its way.

There I sat beneath the tree, and the bell tolled solemnly,

Toll slowly!

While the trees and rivers' voices flowed between the solemn noises,—

Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did all

Toll slowly!

And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and sin,

Like a rhythmic fate sublime.

THE RHYME.

Broad the forest stood (I read) on the hills of Linteged—

Toll slowly!

And three hundred years had stood, mute adown each hoary wood,

Like a full heart, having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly!

And but little thought was theirs, of the silent antique years,

In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt, large and red, on the tower of Linteged,—

Toll slowly!

Lance and spearhead on the height, bristling strange in fiery light,

While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back,—

Toll slowly!

Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire,

When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle wall,—

Toll slowly!

And the castle, seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights had stood,

And to night, anears its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a bride did come,—

Toll slowly!

One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the doors,

"May good angels bless our home."

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies,—

Oh, a bride of cordial mouth,—where the untired smile of youth

Did light outward its own sighs.

'T was a Duke's fair orphan-girl, and her uncle's ward, the Earl

Toll slowly!

Who betrothed her, twelve years old, for the sake of dowry gold,

To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,—

Toll slowly!

Unto both those Lords of Leigh, spake she out right sovranly,

"My will runneth as my blood.

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said,—

Toll slowly!

"'T is my will, as lady free, not to wed a Lord of Leigh,

But Sir Guy of Linteged."

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth,—

Toll slowly!

"Good my niece, that hand withal, looketh somewhat soft and small,

For so large a will, in sooth."

She, too, smiled by that same sign,—but her smile was cold and fine,—

Toll slowly!

"Little hand clasps muckle gold; or it were not worth the hold

Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and sware thickly in his teeth,—

Toll slowly!

"He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed,

Let the life come or the death."

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—

"Thy hound's blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,

"Though he moans not where he lies.

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!"—

Toll slowly!

"By that grave, my lords, which made me, orphaned girl and dowered lady,

I deny you wife and ward."

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread,—

Toll slowly!

Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest

Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridal train, along the night-storm rode amain:—

Toll slowly!

Wild the steeds of lord and serf, struck their hoofs out on the turf,

In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain, the kingsmen's train, along the storm pursued amain—

Toll slowly!

Steed on steed-track, dashing off—thickening, doubling hoof on hoof,

In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the fight, on his red-roan steed of might,—

Toll slowly!

And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,

Smiling out into the night.

"Dost thou fear?" he said at last;—"Nay!" she answered him in haste,—

Toll slowly!

"Not such death as we could find—only life with one behind—

Ride on fast as fear-ride fast!"

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread,—

Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered—down the banks,

To the towers of Linteged.

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed about,—

Toll slowly!

In the courtyard rose the cry—" Live the Duchess and Sir Guy!"

But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck,—

Toll slowly!

"I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh,"

Were the words which she did speak.

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,—

Toll slowly!

When five hundred archers tall, stand beside the castle wall,

To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,—

Toll slowly!

And a fortnight's siege is done—and, except the Duchess, none

Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eye so gray of blee,—

Toll slowly!

And thin lips, that scarcely sheath the cold white gnashing of his teeth,

Gnashed in smiling, absently,-

Cried aloud—"So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess May!"—

Toll slowly!

"Look thy last upon that sun. If thou seest tomorrow's one,

'T will be through a foot of clay.

"Ha, fair bride! Dost hear no sound, save that moaning of the hound?"—

"Thou and I have parted troth,—yet I keep my vengeance-oath,

And the other may come round.

"Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love past compare,"—

Toll slowly!

"Yet thine old love's falchion brave, is as strong a thing to have,

As the will of lady fair.

"Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name thee behoove,"—

Toll slowly!

"Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid the sorrow

Of thy last ill-mated love.

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call back troth,"—

- "He shall altar be and priest,—and he will not cry at least
 - 'I forbid you—I am loath!'

"I will wring thy fingers pale, in the gauntlet of my mail,"—

Toll slowly!

"'Little hand and muckle gold' close shall lie within my hold,

As the sword did to prevail."

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly!

O, and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away

All his boasting, for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it,—

Toll slowly!

"Tower is strong and will is free—thou canst boast, my lord of Leigh,—

But thou boastest little wit."

In her tire-glass gazed she, and she blushed right womanly,—

She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty was so plain,

-" Oath for oath, my lord of Leigh!"

Straight she called her maidens in—"Since ye gave me blame herein,"—

Toll slowly!

"That a bridal such as mine, should lack gauds to make it fine,

Come and shrive me from that sin.

"It is three months gone to-day, since I gave my hand away."—

Toll slowly!

"Bring the gold and bring the gem, we will keep bride state in them,

While we keep the foe at bay.

"On your arms I loose my hair;—comb it smooth and crown it fair,"—

Toll slowly!

"I would look in purple-pall, from this lattice down the wall,

And throw scorn to one that's there!"

O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly!

On the tower the castle's lord leant in silence on his sword,

With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate,—

Toll slowly!

They have almost sapped the wall,—they will enter therewithal,

With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered—snapped upon the stone,—

Toll slowly!

"Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a staff,

When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!—tower is lost, and shame begun;"—

"If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,

We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall,"—

Toll slowly!

- "But if I die here alone,—then I die, who am but one,

 And die nobly for them all.
- "Five true friends lie for my sake—in the moat and in the brake,"—

Toll slowly!

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast,

And none of these will wake.

"And no more of this shall be !—heart-blood weighs too heavily "—

Toll slowly!

"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave

Heaped around and over me.

"Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a plighted faith,"—

Toll slowly!

"Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when Ronald speaks,

Though never a word she saith-

"These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too heavily:"—

Toll slowly!

- "And if I die here apart,—o'er my dead and silent heart

 They shall pass out safe and free.
- "When the foe hath heard it said—'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'"—

Toll slowly!

"That new corse new peace shall bring; and a blessed, blessed thing,

Shall the stone be at its head.

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my memory,"—

"Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride,

Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her and entreat: "—

Toll slowly!

"And their purple pall will spread underneath her fainting head,

While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers,"—

Toll slowly!

"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again

By the suntime of her years.

"Ah, sweet May—ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed thee my belief,—

Toll slowly!

"That thy name expressed thy sweetness,—May of poets, in completeness!

Now my May-day seemeth brief."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim,—

Toll slowly!

Till his true men in the place, wished they stood there face to face

With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends, that wear faithful hearts to do and dare!"—

Toll slowly!

- "Tower must fall, and bride be lost!—swear me service worth the cost,"
 - -Bold they stood around to swear.
- "Each man clasp my hand, and swear, by the deed we failed in there,"—

Toll slowly!

"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"—

Pale they stood around-to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts
to do and dare!"

"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all,—

Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height!"---

Toll slowly!

"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far,—

He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard him speaking so,—

Toll slowly!

-"'Las! the noble heart," they thought,-"he in sooth is grief-distraught.-

Would, we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply,—

Toll slowly!

"Have ye so much time to waste! We who ride here, must ride fast,

As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,—

Toll slowly!

Past the court and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors;

But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower-chambère, did the Duchess

May repair,—

Toll slowly!

"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,

That ye goad him up the stair?"

Calm she stood! unbodkined through, fell her dark hair to her shoe,—

Toll slowly!

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiringglass,

Had not time enough to go.

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! hope is gone like yesterday,"—

"One half-hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech.--

Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

"In the east tower, high'st of all,—loud he cries for steed from stall,"—

Toll slowly!

"'He would ride as far,' quoth he, 'as for love and victory,

Though he rides the castle-wall.'

"And we fetch the steed from stall, up where never a hoof did fall."—

Toll slowly!

"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens hear thee plead,

If he rides the castle-wall."

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor,—

Toll slowly!

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word

Which you might be listening for.

"Get thee in, thou soft ladie!—here is never a place for thee!"—

Toll slowly!

"Braid thy hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan

May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,—

Toll slowly!

Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look

Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside,—

Toll slowly!

"Go to, faithful friends, go to!—Judge no more what ladies do,—

No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke:—

Soft he neighed to answer her; and then followed up the stair,

For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around,—

Toll slowly!

Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,

Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, high'st of all,—there, where never a hoof did fall,—

Toll slowly!

Out they swept, a vision steady,—noble steed and lovely lady,

Calm as if in bower or stall!

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently,—

Toll slowly!

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes,

Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet saints bless thy life!"—

Toll slowly!

"In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed-

But not of my noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun:"—

Toll slowly!

"But by all my womanhood,—which is proved so, true and good,

I will never do this one.

"Now by womanhood's degree, and by wifehood's verity,"—

Toll slowly!

"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed,

Thou hast also need of me.

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand pardie,"—

"If this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed from stall,

Shall be also room for me.

"So the sweet saints with me be" (did she utter solemnly,)—

Toll slowly!

"If a man, this eventide, on the castle-wall will ride, He shall ride the same with me."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out bitter-well,—

Toll slowly!

"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves,

To hear chime a vesper bell?"

She clang closer to his knee—"Ay, beneath the cypress-tree!"—

Toll slowly!

"Mock me not; for otherwhere, than along the greenwood fair,

Have I ridden fast with thee!

"Fast I rode, with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house!"—

Toll slowly!

"What! and would you men should reck, that I dared more for love's sake,

As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb, before all,"—

Toll slowly!

"That, a bride may keep your side, while through castlegate you ride,

Yet eschew the castle-wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,—

Toll slowly!

With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in— Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain; but the small hands closed again,—

Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track,

With a frantic clasp and strain!

Evermore the foeman pour through the crash of window and door,—

Toll slowly!

And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of "kill!" and "flee!"

Strike up clear the general roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain,—but they closed and clung again,—

Toll slowly!

Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,

In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute,—with her shuddering lips half-shut,—

Toll slowly!

Her head fallen as in swound,—hair and knee swept on the ground,—

She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping stone,—

Toll slowly!

Back the iron hoofs did grind, on the battlement behind,

Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode,

Toll slowly!

"Friends, and brothers! save my wife!—Pardon, sweet, in change for life,—

But I ride alone to God!"

Straight as if the Holy name did upbreathe her as a flame,—

Toll slowly!

She upsprang, she rose upright!—in his selle she sat in sight;

By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest,—

"Ring," she cried, "O vesper-bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle!

But the passing bell rings best."

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain,—

Toll slowly!

For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,

On the last verge, rears amain.

And he hangs, he rocks between—and his nostrils curdle in,—

Toll slowly!

And he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall off;

And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human wo, from his staring eyes did go,—

Toll slowly!

And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony

Of the headlong death below,——

And, "Ring, ring,—thou passing-bell," still she cried,
"i' the old chapelle!"—

Toll slowly!

Then back-toppling, crashing back—a dead weight flung out to wrack,

Horse and riders overfell!

* * * * * * * * *

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly!

And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the kirkyard, while the chime

Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeilles moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run,—

And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion and its change,

Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow tree, I a little grave did see,—

Toll slowly!

Where was graved,—"Here undefiled, lieth Maud, a three-year child,

"EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-THREE."

Then, O Spirits—did I say—ye who rode so fast that day,—

Toll slowly !

Did star-wheels and angel-wings, with their holy winnowings,

Keep beside you all the way?

Though in passion ye would dash, with a blind and heavy crash,

Toll slowly!

Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field,—

Though your heart and brain were rash,-

Now, your will is all unwilled—now your pulses are all stilled,—

Toll slowly!

Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as Maud the child,

Whose small grave to-day was filled.

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient now,—

Toll slowly!

And the children might be bold to pluck the kingscups from your mould,

Ere a month had let them grow.

And you let the goldfinch sing, in the alder near, in spring,—

Toll slowly!

Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks out on it,

Murmuring not at anything.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat ye take not wrong:—

When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's evangel,

Time will seem to you not long.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,

Toll slowly!

And I said in underbreath,—all our life is mixed with death,—

And who knoweth which is best?

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

Toll slowly!

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—

Round our restlessness, His rest.

THE LADY'S YES.

"YES!" I answered you last night;
"No!" this morning, Sir, I say!
Colours, seen by candle-light,
Will not look the same by day.

When the tabors played their best,

Lamps above, and laughs below—

Love me sounded like a jest,

Fit for Yes or fit for No!

Call me false, or call me free—
Vow, whatever light may shine,
No man on thy face shall see
Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both—

Time to dance is not to woo—

Wooer light makes fickle troth—

Scorn of me recoils on you!

Learn to win a lady's faith

Nobly, as the thing is high;

Bravely, as for life and death—

With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,

Point her to the starry skies,

Guard her, by your truthful words,

Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true—
Ever true, as wives of yore—
And her Yes, once said to you,
Shall be Yes for evermore.

THE POET AND THE BIRD.

A FABLE.

SAID a people to a poet—"Go out from among us straightway!

While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest of divine.

There's a little fair brown nightingale, who, sitting in the gateway,

Makes fitter music to our ear, than any song of thine!"

The poet went out weeping—the nightingale ceased chanting;

"Now, wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy sweetness done?"

"I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet wanting,

Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under sun."

The poet went out weeping,—and died abroad, bereft there—

The bird flew to his grave and died amid a thousand wails!—

Yet, when I last came by the place, I swear the music left there

Was only of the poet's song, and not the nightingale's!

THE LOST BOWER.

'God bless all our gains,' say we;
But 'May God bless all our losses,'
Better suits with our degree.—
Listen gentle—ay, and simple! Listen children on the

Green the land is where my daily

In the pleasant orchard closes,

Steps in jocund childhood played—
Dimpled close with hill and valley,
Dappled very close with shade;
Summer-snow of apple blossoms, running up from glade to glade.

There is one hill I see nearer, In my vision of the rest; And a little wood seems clearer,

As it climbeth from the west,

Sideway from the tree-locked valley, to the airy upland

crest.

Small the wood is, green with hazels,
And, completing the ascent,
Where the wind blows and sun dazzles,
Thrills, in leafy tremblement;
Like a heart that, after climbing, beateth quickly through content.

Not a step the wood advances
O'er the open hill-top's bound:
There, in green arrest, the branches
See their image on the ground:
You may walk beneath them smiling, glad with sight
and glad with sound.

For you hearken on your right hand, How the birds do leap and call In the greenwood, out of sight and
Out of reach and fear of all;
And the squirrels crack the filberts, through their
cheerful madrigal.

On your left, the sheep are cropping

The slant grass and daisies pale;

And five apple-trees stand dropping

Separate shadows toward the vale,

Over which, in choral silence, the hills look you their

"All hail!"

Far out, kindled by each other,

Shining hills on hills arise;

Close as brother leans to brother,

When they press beneath the eyes

Of some father praying blessings from the gifts of paradise.

While beyond, above them mounted, And above their woods also, Malvern hills, for mountains counted Not unduly, loom a-row—

Keepers of Piers Plowman's visions, through the sunshine and the snow.*

Yet in childhood little prized I
That fair walk and far survey:
'T was a straight walk, unadvised by
The least mischief worth a nay—

Up and down—as dull as grammar on an eve of holiday!

But the wood, all close and clenching Bough in bough and root in root,— No more sky (for over-branching) At your head than at your foot,—

Oh, the wood drew me within it, by a glamour past dispute.

Few and broken paths showed through it,
Where the sheep had tried to run,—
Forced, with snowy wool to strew it

^{*} The Malvern Hills of Worcestershire are the scene of Langlande's visions; and thus present the earliest classic ground of English poetry.

Round the thickets, when anon

They with silly thorn-pricked noses, bleated back into the sun.

But my childish heart beat stronger
Than those thickets dared to grow:
I could pierce them! I could longer
Travel on, methought, than so!

Sheep for sheep-paths! braver children climb and creep where they would go.

And the poets wander, said I,
Over places all as rude!
Bold Rinaldo's lovely lady
Sat to meet him in a wood—

Rosalinda, like a fountain, laughed out pure with solitude.

And if Chaucer had not travelled
Through a forest by a well,
He had never dreamt nor marvelled
At those ladies fair and fell

Who lived smiling without loving, in their islandcitadel. Thus I thought of the old singers,

And took courage from their song,

Till my little struggling fingers

Tore asunder gyve and thong

Of the lichens which entrapped me, and the barrier branches strong.

On a day, such pastime keeping,
With a fawn's heart debonaire,
Under-crawling, overleaping
Thorns that prick and boughs that bear,
I stood suddenly astonied—I was gladdened unaware!

From the place I stood in, floated

Back the covert dim and close;

And the open ground was suited

Carpet-smooth with grass and moss,

And the blue-bell's purple presence signed it worthily

across.

Here a linden-tree stood, brightening All adown its silver rind; For as some trees draw the lightning,
So this tree, unto my mind,
Drew to earth the blessed sunshine, from the sky
where it was shrined.

Tall the linden-tree, and near it

An old hawthorn also grew;

And wood-ivy like a spirit

Hovered dimly round the two,

Shaping thence that Bower of beauty, which I sing of thus to you.

'Twas a bower for garden fitter,

Than for any woodland wide!

Though a fresh and dewy glitter

Struck it through, from side to side,

Shaped and shaven was the freshness, as by gardencunning plied.

Oh, a lady might have come there, Hooded fairly like her hawk, With a book or lute in summer,

And a hope of sweeter talk,—

Listening less to her own music, than for footsteps on
the walk.

But that bower appeared a marvel
In the wildness of the place!
With such seeming art and travail,
Finely fixed and fitted was

Leaf to leaf, the dark-green ivy, to the summit from the base.

And the ivy, veined and glossy, Was inwrought with eglantine; And the wild hop fibred closely, And the large-leaved columbine,

Arch of door and window-mullion, did right sylvanly entwine.

Rose-trees, either side the door, were Growing lythe and growing tall; Each one set a summer warder For the keeping of the hall,—
With a red rose, and a white rose, leaning, nodding at
the wall.

As I entered—mosses hushing

Stole all noises from my foot;

And a round elastic cushion,

Clasped within the linden's root,

Took me in a chair of silence, very rare and absolute.

Greenly, silently inlaid,

Through quick motions made before me,

With fair counterparts in shade,

Of the fair serrated ivy-leaves which slanted overhead.

All the floor was paved with glory,—

"Is such pavement in a palace?"
So I questioned in my thought:
The sun, shining through the chalice
Of the red rose hung without,

Threw within a red libation, like an answer to my doubt.

At the same time, on the linen

Of my childish lap there fell

Two white may-leaves, downward winning

Through the ceiling's miracle,

a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet ble

From a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet blessing well.

> Down to floor and up to ceiling, Quick I turned my childish face; With an innocent appealing For the secret of the place,

To the trees which surely knew it, in partaking of the grace.

Where's no foot of human creature,
How could reach a human hand?
And if this be work of nature,
Why is nature sudden bland,
Breaking off from other wild work? It was hard to

Breaking off from other wild work? It was hard to understand.

Was she weary of rough-doing,

Of the bramble and the thorn?

Did she pause in tender ruing,

Here, of all her sylvan scorn?

Or, in mock of art's deceiving, was the sudden mildness worn?

Be the work of Dryad strong;

Who, surviving all that chanced

In the world's old pagan wrong,

Lay hid, feeding in the woodland, on the last true

poet's song?

Or could this same Bower (I fancied)

Left, because of the rough ways,

Unassoiled by Ave Marys

Which the passing pilgrim prays,—

And beyond St. Catherine's chiming, on the blessed

Sabbath days?

Or was this the house of faries.

So, young muser, I sat listening
To my Fancy's wildest word—
On a sudden, through the glistening
Leaves around a little stirred,

Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt than heard.

Softly, finely, it inwound me—
From the world it shut me in,—
Like a fountain falling round me,
Which with silver waters thin

Clips a little marble Naiad, sitting smilingly within.

Whence the music came, who knoweth?

I know nothing. But indeed

Pan or Faunus never bloweth

So much sweetness from a reed,

Which has sucked the milk of waters, at the oldest

riverhead.

Never lark the sun can waken
With such sweetness! when the lark,

The high planets overtaking

In the half evanished Dark,

Casts his singing to their singing, like an arrow to
the mark.

Never nightingale so singeth—
Oh! she leans on thorny tree,
And her poet-soul she flingeth
Over pain to victory!

Yet she never sings such music,—or she sings it not to me!

Never blackbirds, never thrushes,

Nor small finches sing as sweet,

When the sun strikes through the bushes,

To their crimson clinging feet,

And their pretty eyes look sideways to the summer heavens complete.

If it were a bird, it seemed Most like Chaucer's, which, in sooth, He of green and azure dreamed, While it sat in spirit-ruth

On that bier of a crowned lady, singing nigh her silent mouth.

If it were a bird!—ah, sceptic,
Give me "Yea" or give me "Nay"—
Though my soul were nympholeptic,
As I heard that virëlay,

You may stoop your pride to pardon, for my sin is far away.

I rose up in exaltation

And an inward trembling heat,

And (it seemed) in geste of passion,

Dropped the music to my feet,

Like a garment rustling downwards!—such a silence followed it.

Heart and head beat through the quiet,
Full and heavily, though slower;
In the song, I think, and by it,
Mystic Presences of power

Had up-snatched me to the Timeless, then returned me to the Hour.

In a child-abstraction lifted,
Straightway from the bower I past;
Foot and soul being dimly drifted
Through the greenwood, till, at last,
In the hill-top's open sunshine, I all consciously was

cast.

Face to face with the true mountains,

I stood silently and still;

Drawing strength for fancy's dauntings,

From the air about the hill,

And from Nature's open mercies, and most debonaire goodwill.

Oh! the golden-hearted daisies

Witnessed there, before my youth,

To the truth of things, with praises

To the beauty of the truth;

And I woke to Nature's real, laughing joyfully for both.

And I said within me, laughing,
I have found a bower to-day,
A green lusus—fashioned half in

Chance, and half in Nature's play—
And a little bird sings nigh it, I will nevermore missay.

Henceforth, *I* will be the fairy

Of this bower, not built by one;

I will go there, sad or merry,

With each morning's benison;

And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I have won.

So I said. But the next morning,

(—Child, look up into my face—

'Ware, oh sceptic, of your scorning!

This is truth in its pure grace;)

The next morning, all had vanished, or my wandering missed the place.

Bring an oath most sylvan holy,
And upon it swear me true—
By the wind-bells swinging slowly
Their mute curfews in the dew—
By the advent of the snow-drop—by the rosemary and rue,—

I affirm by all or any,

Let the cause be charm or chance,

That my wandering searches many

Missed the bower of my romance—

That I nevermore upon it, turned my mortal countenance.

I affirm that, since I lost it,

Never bower has seemed so fair—

Never garden-creeper crossed it,

With so deft and brave an air—

Never bird sung in the summer, as I saw and heard them there.

Day by day, with new desire,

Toward my wood I ran in faith—

Under leaf and over briar—

Through the thickets, out of breath—

Like the prince who rescued Beauty from the sleep as long as death.

But his sword of mettle clashèd, And his arm smote strong, I ween; And her dreaming spirit flashèd Through her body's fair white screen,—

And the light thereof might guide him up the cedarn
alleys green.

But for me, I saw no splendour—
All my sword was my child-heart;
And the wood refused surrender
Of that bower it held apart,
Safe as Œdipus's grave-place, 'mid Colone's olives
swart.

As Aladdin sought the basements
His fair palace rose upon,
And the forty golden casements
Which gave answers to the sun;

So, in wilderment of gazing, I looked up, and I looked down.

Years have vanished since, as wholly

As the little bower did then;

And you call it tender folly

That such thoughts should come again?

Ah! I cannot change this sighing for your smiling,

brother-men!

For this loss it did prefigure
Other loss of better good,
When my soul, in spirit-vigour,
And in ripened womanhood,

Fell from visions of more beauty than an arbour in a wood.

I have lost—oh many a pleasure—
Many a hope and many a power—
Studious health and merry leisure—
The first dew on the first flower!

But the first of all my losses was the losing of the bower.

I have lost the dream of Doing, And the other Dream of Done— The first spring in the pursuing, The first pride in the Begun,—

First recoil from incompletion, in the face of what is won-

Exultations in the far light,
Where some cottage only is—
Mild dejections in the starlight,

Which the sadder-hearted miss;

And the child-cheek blushing scarlet, for the very shame

of bliss!

I have lost the sound child-sleeping

Which the thunder could not break;

Something too of the strong leaping

Of the staglike heart awake,

Which the pale is low for keeping in the road it ought
to take.

Some respect to social fictions

Hath been also lost by me;

And some generous genuflexions,

Which my spirit offered free

To the pleasant old conventions of our false Humanity.

All my losses did I tell you,
Ye, perchance, would look away;—
Ye would answer me, "Farewell! you
Make sad company to-day;
And your tears are falling faster than the bitter words
you say."

For God placed me like a dial In the open ground, with power; And my heart had for its trial, All the sun and all the shower!

And I suffered many losses; and my first was of the bower.

Laugh ye? If that loss of mine be

Of no heavy seeming weight—

When the cone falls from the pine-tree,

The young children laughed thereat;

Yet the wind that struck it, riseth, and the tempest shall be great!

One who knew me in my childhood,
In the glamour and the game,
Looking on me long and mild, would
Never know me for the same!
Come, unchanging recollections, where those changes
overcame.

On this couch I weakly lie on, While I count my memories,— Through the fingers which, still sighing,
I press closely on mine eyes,—
Clear as once beneath the sunshine, I behold the bower
arise.

Springs the linden-tree as greenly,
Stroked with light adown its rind—
And the ivy-leaves serenely
Each in either intertwined,
And the rose-trees at the doorway, they have neither grown nor pined!

From those overblown faint roses,

Not a leaf appeareth shed,

And that little bud discloses

Not a thorn's-breadth more of red,

For the winters and the summers which have passed me overhead.

And that music overfloweth,

Sudden sweet, the sylvan eaves;

Thrush or nightingale—who knoweth?

Fay or Faunus—who believes?

But my heart still trembles in me, to the trembling of the leaves.

Is the bower lost, then? Who sayeth
That the bower indeed is lost?
Hark! my spirit in it prayeth
Through the solstice and the frost,—

And the prayer preserves it greenly, to the last and uttermost—

Till another open for me
In God's Eden-land unknown,
With an angel at the doorway,
White with gazing at His Throne;
And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—"

And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—" ALL IS LOST . . . and won!"

A CHILD ASLEEP.

How he sleepeth! having drunken

Weary childhood's mandragore,

From his pretty eyes have sunken

Pleasures, to make room for more—

Sleeping near the withered nosegay, which he pulled the day before.

Nosegays! leave them for the waking!

Throw them earthward where they grew;

Dim are such beside the breaking

Amaranths he looks unto—

Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden From the palms they sprang beneath, Now perhaps divinely holden,

Swing against him in a wreath—

We may think so from the quickening of his bloom

and of his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,

While the young child dreameth on;

Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth

With the glory thou hast won!

Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn, by summer sun.

We should see the spirits ringing

Round thee,—were the clouds away!

'T is the child-heart draws them, singing

In the silent-seeming clay—

Singing!—Stars that seem the mutest, go in music all

the way.

As the moths around a taper,

As the bees around a rose,

As at sunset, many a vapour,—

So the spirits group and close

Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its

repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,
With their diadems of youth
Striking on thy ringlets sheenly,—
While thou smilest, . . not in sooth

Thy smile, . . but the overfair one, dropt from some ethereal mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,

During slumber, shade by shade

To fine down this childish beauty

To the thing it must be made,

Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it fade.

Now he lieth dead and dumb—

Now he hears the angels' voices

Folding silence in the room—

Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated—

Breathe no breath across his eyes;

Lifted up and separated

On the hand of God he lies,

In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral

In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral sanctities.

Could ye bless him—father—mother?

Bless the dimple in his cheek?

Dare ye look at one another,

And the benediction speak?

Would ye not break out in weeping, and confe

Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess yourselves too weak?

He is harmless—ye are sinful,—
Ye are troubled,—he, at ease!
From his slumber, virtue winful
Floweth outward with increase—
Dare not bless him! but be blessed by his peace—and
go in peace.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

"Φεὖ, φεὖ, τι προσδερχεσθε μ' ομμασιν, τεχνα." ΜΕΒΕΑ

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,

Ere the sorrow comes with years?

They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—

And that cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows:

The young birds are chirping in the nest;

The young fawns are playing with the shadows;

The young flowers are blowing toward the west— But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly !--

They are weeping in the playtime of the others,

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,

Why their tears are falling so?—

The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago—

The old tree is leafless in the forest—

The old year is ending in the frost—

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—

The old hope is hardest to be lost:

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

Do you ask them why they stand

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,

In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,

And their looks are sad to see,

For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses

Down the cheeks of infancy—

"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;

"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!

Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—

Our grave-rest is very far to seek!

Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,

For the outside earth is cold,—

And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,

And the graves are for the old!

"True," say the young children, "it may happen
That we die before our time!

Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen Like a snowball, in the rime.

We looked into the pit prepared to take her— Was no room for any work in the close clay:

From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her, Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries!—

Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,

For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—

And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in The shroud, by the kirk-chime!

It is good when it happens," say the children,

"That we die before our time!"

Death in life, as best to have!

They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,

And we cannot run or leap—

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely

To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—

We fall upon our faces, trying to go;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,

Through the coal-dark underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all!—
And all day the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,

'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning,)

'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing

For a moment, mouth to mouth—

Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing

Of their tender human youth!

Let them feel that this cold metallic motion

Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—

Let them prove their inward souls against the notion

That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!—

Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,

As if Fate in each were stark;

And the children's souls, which God is calling sun-

Spin on blindly in the dark.

ward.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,

That they look to Him and pray—
So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,

Will bless them another day.

They answer "Who is God that He should been a

They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word!
And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)

Strangers speaking at the door:

Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,

Hears our weeping any more?

- "Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;
 And at midnight's hour of harm,—

 'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.*

 We know no other words, except 'Our Father,'
 And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
 And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
 'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
 (For they call him good and mild)

 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
- "But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,

 "He is speechless as a stone;

 And they tell us, of His image is the master

 Who commands us to work on.

'Come and rest with me, my child.'

^{*} A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Horne's Report of his commission. The name of the poet of "Orion" and "Cosmo de' Medici" has, however, a change of associations, and comes in time to remind me (with other noble instances) that we have some brave poetic heat still in our literature,—though open to the reproach, on certain points, of being somewhat gelid in our humanity.

Go to!" say the children,—"Up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find!
Do not mock us; grief has left us unbelieving,—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what you teach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you;

They are weary ere they run;

They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory

Which is brighter than the sun:

They know the grief of men, but not the wisdom;

Are bitter with despairing, but not calm—

Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—

Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—

Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly

No dear remembrance keep,—

Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:

Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,

And their look is dread to see,

For you think you see their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity:—

"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—

Stiffe down with a mailed heel its palpitation,

And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?

Our blood splashes upwards, O our tyrants,

And your purple shows your path;

But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence

Than the strong man in his wrath!"

CROWNED AND WEDDED.

When last before her people's face her own fair face she bent,

Within the meek projection of that shade she was content

To erase the child-smile from her lips, which seemed as if it might

Be still kept holy from the world, to childhood still in sight—

To erase it with a solemn vow,—a princely vow—to rule—

A priestly vow-to rule by grace of God the pitiful,-

A very god-like vow—to rule in right and righteousness,

And with the law and for the land !—so God the vower bless!

- The minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I ween,
- And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty aisled scene:
- The priests stood stoled in their pomp, the sworded chiefs in theirs,
- And so, the collared knights,—and so, the civil ministers,—
- And so, the waiting lords and dames—and little pages
 best
- At holding trains—and legates so, from countries east and west—
- So, alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladies bright,
- Along whose brows the queen's, new crowned, flashed coronets to light!—
- And so, the people at the gates, with priestly hands on high,
- Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty!
- And so the Dead—who lay in rows beneath the minster floor,
- There, verily an awful state maintaining evermore—

- The statesman, whose clean palm will kiss no bribe whate'er it be—
- The courtier, who, for no fair queen, will rise up to his knee—
- The court-dame, who, for no court-tire, will leave her shroud behind—
- The laureate, who no courtlier rhyme than "dust to dust" can find—
- The kings and queens, who having made that vow and worn that crown,
- Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deep adown!
- Dieu et mon droit—what is 't to them ?—what meaning can it have ?—
- The King of kings, the rights of death—God's judgment and the grave!
- And when betwixt the quick and dead the young fair queen had vowed,
- The living shouted "May she live! Victoria, live!" aloud—
- And as the loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed between,
- "The blessings happy monarchs have, be thine, O crowned queen!"

- But now before her people's face she bendeth hers anew,
- And calls them, while she vows, to be her witness thereunto.
- She vowed to rule, and in that oath, her childhood put away—
- She doth maintain her womanhood, in vowing love to-day.
- O, lovely lady !—let her vow !—such lips become such vows,—
- And fairer goeth bridal wreath than crown with vernal brows!
- O, lovely lady!—let her vow!—yea, let her vow to love!—
- And though she be no less a queen—with purples hung above,
- The pageant of a court behind, the royal kin around,

 And woven gold to catch her looks turned maidenly
 to ground,—
- Yet may the bride-veil hide from her a little of that state,
 While loving hopes, for retinues, about her sweetness
 wait!—

- SHE vows to love, who vowed to rule—the chosen at her side—
- Let none say, God preserve the queen !—but rather, Bless the bride !—
- None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none violate the dream
- Wherein no monarch, but a wife, she to herself may seem!
- Or, if ye say, Preserve the queen!—oh, breathe it inward low—
- She is a woman, and beloved!—and 'tis enough but so!

 Count it enough, thou noble prince, who tak'st her by
 the hand,
- And claimest for thy lady-love, our lady of the land !-
- And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and rare,
- And true to truth and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg were,—
- We charge thee, by thy lofty thoughts, and by thy poet-mind,
- Which not by glory and degree takes measure of mankind,

- Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
- And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing!
- And now, upon our queen's last vow, what blessings shall we pray?
- None straitened to a shallow crown, will suit our lips to-day.
- Behold, they must be free as love—they must be broad as free—
- Even to the borders of heaven's light and earth's humanity!
- Long live she !—send up loyal shouts—and true hearts pray between,—
- "The blessings happy PEASANTS have, be thine, O crowned queen!"

CROWNED AND BURIED.

Napoleon!—years ago, and that great word,
Compact of human breath in hate and dread
And exultation, skied us overhead—
An atmosphere whose lightning was the sword,
Scathing the cedars of the world,—drawn down
In burnings, by the metal of a crown.

Napoleon! Nations, while they cursed that name, Shook at their own curse; and while others bore Its sound, as of a trumpet, on before, Brass-fronted legions justified its fame—And dying men, on trampled battle-sods, Near their last silence, uttered it for God's.

Napoleon! Sages, with high foreheads drooped,
Did use it for a problem: children small
Leapt up to greet it, as at manhood's call:
Priests blessed it from their altars overstooped
By meek-eyed Christs,—and widows with a moan
Spake it, when questioned why they sat alone.

That name consumed the silence of the snows
In Alpine keeping, holy and cloud-hid!
The mimic eagles dared what Nature's did,
And over-rushed her mountainous repose
In search of eyries: and the Egyptian river
Mingled the same word with its grand 'For ever.'

That name was shouted near the pyramidal Egyptian tombs, whose mummied habitants, Packed to humanity's significance,
Motioned it back with stillness! Shouts as idle
As hireling artists' work of myrrh and spice,
Which swathed last glories round the Ptolemies.

The world's face changed to hear it! Kingly men
Came down, in chidden babes' bewilderment,
From autocratic places—each content
With sprinkled ashes for anointing!—then
The people laughed or wondered for the nonce,
To see one throne a composite of thrones.

Napoleon! And the torrid vastitude
Of India felt, in throbbings of the air,
That name which scattered by disastrous blare
All Europe's bound-lines,—drawn afresh in blood!
Napoleon—from the Russias, west to Spain!
And Austria trembled—till we heard her chain.

And Germany was 'ware-—and Italy,

Oblivious of old fames—her laurel-locked,

High-ghosted Cæsars passing uninvoked,—

Did crumble her own ruins with her knee,

To serve a newer!—Ay! and Frenchmen cast

A future from them, nobler than her past.

For, verily, though France augustly rose
With that raised NAME, and did assume by such
The purple of the world,—none gave so much
As she, in purchase—to speak plain, in loss—
Whose hands, to freedom stretched, dropped paralyzed
To wield a sword, or fit an undersized

King's crown to a great man's head! And though along Her Paris' streets, did float on frequent streams
Of triumph, pictured or emmarbled dreams,
Dreamt right by genius in a world gone wrong,—
No dream, of all so won, was fair to see
As the lost vision of her liberty.

Napoleon! 'twas a high name lifted high!

It met at last God's thunder sent to clear

Our compassing and covering atmosphere,

And open a clear sight, beyond the sky,

Of supreme empire! this of earth's was done—

And kings crept out again to feel the sun.

The kings crept out—the peoples sat at home,—
And finding the long-invocated peace
A pall embroidered with worn images
Of rights divine, too scant to cover doom
Such as they suffered,—cursed the corn that grew
Rankly, to bitter bread, on Waterloo!

A deep gloom centered in the deep repose—
The nations stood up mute to count their dead—
And he who owned the Name which vibrated
Through silence,—trusting to his noblest foes,
When earth was all too gray for chivalry—
Died of their mercies, 'mid the desert sea.

O wild St. Helen! very still she kept him,
With a green willow for all pyramid,—
Which stirred a little if the low wind did,
A little more, if pilgrims overwept him
And parted the lithe boughs to see the clay
Which seemed to cover his for judgment-day.

Nay! not so long!—France kept her old affection,
As deeply as the sepulchre the corse,
Until dilated by such love's remorse
To a new angel of the resurrection,
She cried, "Behold, thou England! I would have
The dead whereof thou wottest, from that grave."

And England answered in the courtesy
Which, ancient foes turned lovers, may befit,—
"Take back thy dead! and when thou buriest it,
Throw in all former strifes 'twixt thee and me."
Amen, mine England! 'tis a courteous claim—
But ask a little room too . . . for thy shame!

Because it was not well, it was not well,

Nor tuneful with thy lofty-chanted part

Among the Oceanides,—that heart

To bind and bare, and vex with vulture fell.

I would, my noble England, men might seek

All crimson stains upon thy breast—not cheek!

I would that hostile fleets had scarred thy bay,
Instead of the lone ship which waited moored
Until thy princely purpose was assured,
Then left a shadow—not to pass away—
Not for to-night's moon, nor to-morrow's sun!
Green watching hills, ye witnessed what was done!

And since it was done,—in sepulchral dust,
We fain would pay back something of our debt
To France, if not to honour, and forget
How through much fear we falsified the trust
Of a fallen foe and exile!—We return
Orestes to Electra...in his urn!

A little urn—a little dust inside,
Which once outbalanced the large earth, albeit
To-day, a four-years' child might carry it,
Sleek-browed and smiling "Let the burden 'bide!"
Orestes to Electra!—O fair town
Of Paris, how the wild tears will run down,

And run back in the chariot-marks of Time,
When all the people shall come forth to meet
The passive victor, death-still in the street
He rode through 'mid the shouting and bell-chime
And martial music,—under eagles which
Dyed their ensanguined beaks at Austerlitz!

Napoleon! he hath come again—borne home
Upon the popular ebbing heart,—a sea
Which gathers its own wrecks perpetually,
Majestically moaning. Give him room!—
Room for the dead in Paris! welcome solemn
And grave deep, 'neath the cannon-moulded column!*

There, weapon spent and warrior spent may rest From roar of fields! provided Jupiter

Dare trust Saturnus to lie down so near

His bolts!—And this he may! For, dispossessed

Of any godship, lies the godlike arm—

The goat, Jove sucked, as likely to do harm!

^{*} It was the first intention to bury him under the column.

And yet... Napoleon!—the recovered name
Shakes the old casements of the world! and we
Look out upon the passing pageantry,
Attesting that the Dead makes good his claim
To a Gaul grave,—another kingdom won—
The last—of few spans—by Napoleon!

Blood fell like dew beneath his sunrise—sooth!
But glittered dew-like in the covenanted
And high-rayed light. He was a tyrant—granted!
But the autos of his autocratic mouth
Said yea i' the people's French! he magnified
The image of the freedom he denied.

And if they asked for rights, he made reply,
"Ye have my glory!"—and so, drawing round them
His ample purple, glorified and bound them
In an embrace that seemed identity.
He ruled them like a tyrant—true! but none
Were ruled like slaves! Each felt Napoleon!

I do not praise this man: the man was flawed

For Adam—much more, Christ!—his knee, unbent—
His hand, unclean—his aspiration, pent

Within a sword-sweep—pshaw!—but since he had

The genius to be loved, why let him have

The justice to be honoured in his grave.

I think this nation's tears, poured thus together,

Nobler than shouts! I think this funeral

Grander than crownings, though a Pope bless all:

I think this grave stronger than thrones! But whether

The crowned Napoleon or the buried clay

Be better, I discern not—Angels may.

TO FLUSH, MY DOG.

Loving friend, the gift of one,
Who, her own true faith, hath run,
Through thy lower nature;*
Be my benediction said.
With my hand upon thy head,
Gentle fellow-creature!

Like a lady's ringlets brown,
Flow thy silken ears adown
Either side demurely,
Of thy silver-suited breast
Shining out from all the rest
Of thy body purely.

^{*}This dog was the gift of my dear and admired friend, Miss Mitford, and belongs to the beautiful race she has rendered celebrated among English and American readers. The Flushes have their laurels as well as the Casars,—the chief difference (at least the very head and front of it) consisting, according to my perception, in the bald head.

Darkly brown thy body is,

Till the sunshine, striking this,
Alchymize its dulness,—

When the sleek curls manifold
Flash all over into gold,

With a burnished fulness.

Underneath my stroking hand,
Startled eyes of hazel bland
Kindling, growing larger,—
Up thou leapest with a spring,
Full of prank and curvetting,
Leaping like a charger.

Leap! thy broad tail waves a light;

Leap! thy slender feet are bright,

Canopied in fringes.

Leap—those tasselled ears of thine

Flicker strangely, fair and fine,

Down their golden inches.

Yet, my pretty sportive friend,
Little is 't to such an end
That I praise thy rareness!
Other dogs may be thy peers
Haply in these drooping ears,
And this glossy fairness.

But of thee it shall be said,

This dog watched beside a bed

Day and night unweary,—

Watched within a curtained room,

Where no sunbeam brake the gloom

Round the sick and dreary.

Roses, gathered for a vase,
In that chamber died apace,
Beam and breeze resigning—
This dog only, waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone,
Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dew
Tracked the hares and followed through
Sunny moor and meadow—
This dog only, crept and crept
Next a languid cheek that slept,
Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer
Bounded at the whistle clear,
Up the woodside hieing—
This dog only, watched in reach
Of a faintly uttered speech,
Or a louder sighing.

And if one or two quick tears

Dropped upon his glossy ears,

Or a sigh came double,—

Up he sprang in eager haste,

Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,

In a tender trouble.

And this dog was satisfied,

If a pale thin hand would glide,

Down his dewlaps sloping,—

Which he pushed his nose within,

After,—platforming his chin

On the palm left open.

This dog, if a friendly voice

Call him now to blyther choice

Than such chamber-keeping,

'Come out!' calling from the door,—

Presseth backward as before,

Up against me leaping,

Therefore to this dog will I,
Tenderly not scornfully,
Render praise and favour!
With my hand upon his head,
Is my benediction said
Therefore, and for ever.

And because he loves me so,
Better than his kind will do
Often, man or woman,—
Give I back more love again
Than dogs often take of men,—
Leaning from my Human.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,
Pretty collars make thee fine,
Sugared milk make fat thee!
Pleasures wag on in thy tail—
Hands of gentle motion fail
Nevermore, to pat thee!

Downy pillow take thy head,
Silken coverlid bestead,
Sunshine help thy sleeping!
No fly's buzzing wake thee up—
No man break thy purple cup,
Set for drinking deep in.

Whiskered cats arointed flee—Sturdy stoppers keep from thee Cologne distillations;

Nuts lie in thy path for stones,
And thy feast-day macaroons

Turn to daily rations!

Mock I thee, in wishing weal?—
Tears are in my eyes to feel
Thou art made so straightly,
Blessing needs must straighten too,—
Little canst thou joy or do,
Thou who lovest greatly.

Yet be blessed to the height
Of all good and all delight
Pervious to thy nature,—
Only loved beyond that line,
With a love that answers thine,
Loving fellow-creature!

THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

WHEN ye stood up in the house With your little childish feet, And, in touching Life's first shows, First, the touch of Love, did meet,-Love and Nearness seeming one, By the hearthlight cast before,-And, of all Beloveds, none Standing farther than the door-Not a name being dear to thought, With its owner beyond call,-Nor a face, unless it brought Its own shadow to the wall,-When the worst recorded change Was of cherry dropt from bough,-When love's sorrow seemed more strange Than love's treason can seem now,-

Then, the Loving took you up

Soft, upon their elder knees,—

Telling why the statues droop

Underneath the churchyard trees,—

And how ye must lie beneath them,

Through the winters long and deep,

Till the last trump overbreathe them,

And ye smile out of your sleep...

Oh, ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if they said

A tale of fairy ships

With a swan-wing for a sail!—

Oh, ye kissed their loving lips

For the merry, merry tale!—

So carelessly ye thought upon the Dead.

Soon ye read in solemn stories
Of the men of long ago—
Of the pale bewildering glories
Shining farther than we know,—
Of the heroes with the laurel,
Of the poets with the bay,

Of the two worlds' earnest quarrel For that beauteous Helena,— How Achilles at the portal Of the tent, heard footsteps nigh, And his strong heart, half-immortal, Met the *keitai* with a cry,— How Ulysses left the sunlight For the pale eidola race, Blank and passive through the dun light, Staring blindly on his face! How that true wife said to Pœtus, With calm smile and wounded heart,-"Sweet, it hurts not!"—how Admetus Saw his blessed one depart!-How King Arthur proved his mission,-And Sir Rowland wound his horn,-And at Sangreal's moony vision Swords did bristle round like corn,-Oh! ye lifted up your head, and it seemed the while ye read,

That this death, then, must be found

A Valhalla for the crowned-

The heroic who prevail!

None, be sure, can enter in

Far below a paladin

Of a noble, noble tale!—

So, awfully, ye thought upon the Dead.

Ay! but soon ye woke up shrieking,-As a child that wakes at night From a dream of sisters speaking In a garden's summer-light,— That wakes, starting up and bounding, In a lonely, lonely bed, With a wall of darkness round him, Stifling black about his head!-And the full sense of your mortal Rushed upon you deep and loud, And ye heard the thunder hurtle From the silence of the cloud-Funeral-torches at your gateway Threw a dreadful light within; All things changed! you rose up straightway, And saluted Death and Sin!

Since, -your outward man has rallied, And your eye and voice grown bold-Yet the Sphinx of Life stands pallid, With her saddest secret told! Happy places have grown holy: If ye went where once ye went, Only tears would fall down slowly, As at solemn sacrament: Merry books, once read for pastime, If ye dared to read again, Only memories of the last time Would swim darkly up the brain! Household names, which used to flutter Through your laughter unawares,-God's Divine one, would ye utter With less trembling in your prayers! Ye have dropt adown your head, and it seems as if ye

On your own hearts in the path
Ye are called to in His wrath,—
And your prayers go up in wail!
—' Dost Thou see, them, all our loss,

tread

O Thou agonized on cross?

Art thou reading all its tale?

So, mournfully, ye think upon the Dead!

Pray, pray, thou who also weepest, And the drops will slacken so ;-Weep, weep!—and the watch thou keepest, With a quicker count will go. Think !-- the shadow on the dial For the nature most undone, Marks the passing of the trial, Proves the presence of the sun! Look, look up, in starry passion, To the throne above the spheres,-Learn! the spirit's gravitation Still must differ from the tear's. Hope! with all the strength thou usest In embracing thy despair! Love! the earthly love thou losest Shall return to thee more fair. Work! make clear the forest-tangles Of the wildest stranger-land;

Trust! the blessed deathly angels
Whisper, 'Sabbath hours at hand!'
By the heart's wound when most gory
By the longest agony,

Smile!—Behold, in sudden glory

The Transfigured smiles on thee!

And ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if He said,

"My Beloved, is it so?

Have ye tasted of my wo?—

Of my Heaven ye shall not fail!"—

He stands brightly where the shade is, With the keys of Death and Hades,

And there, ends the mournful tale !— So, hopefully, ye think upon the Dead.

A FLOWER IN A LETTER.

WRITTEN 1839.

My lonely chamber next the sea,
Is full of many flowers set free
By summer's earliest duty;
Dear friends upon the garden-walk
Might stop amid their fondest talk,
To pull the least in beauty.

A thousand flowers—each seeming one
That learnt, by gazing on the sun,
To counterfeit his shining—
Within whose leaves the holy dew
That falls from heaven, hath won anew
A glory . . . in declining.

Red roses used to praises long,

Contented with the poet's song,

The nightingale's being over:

And lilies white, prepared to touch

The whitest thought, nor soil it much,

Of dreamer turned to lover.

Deep violets you liken to

The kindest eyes that look on you,
Without a thought disloyal:

And cactuses, a queen might don,
If weary of her golden crown,
And still appear as royal!

Pansies for ladies all! I wis
That none who wear such brooches, miss
A jewel in the mirror:
And tulips, children love to stretch
Their fingers down, to feel in each
Its beauty's secret nearer.

Love's language may be talked with these!

To work out choicest sentences,

No blossoms can be meeter,—

And, such being used in Eastern bowers,

Young maids may wonder if the flowers

Or meanings be the sweeter.

And such being strewn before a bride,

Her little foot may turn aside,

Their longer bloom decreeing!

Unless some voices whispered sound

Should make her gaze upon the ground

Too earnestly—for seeing.

And such being scattered on a grave,
Whoever mourneth there may have
A type that seemeth worthy
Of a fair body hid below,
Which bloomed on earth a time ago,
Then perished as the earthy.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,
Across the brimming cup some guest
Their rainbow colours viewing,
May feel them,—with a silent start,—
The covenant, his childish heart
With nature, made,—renewing.

No flowers our gardened England hath,

To match with these, in bloom and breath,

Which from the world are hiding

In sunny Devon moist with rills,—

A nunnery of cloistered hills,—

The elements presiding.

By Loddon's stream the flowers are fair
That meet one gifted lady's care
With prodigal rewarding;
But Beauty is too used to run
To Mitford's bower—to want the sun
To light her through the garden!

And here, all summers are comprised—
The nightly frosts shrink exorcised
Before the priestly moonshine!
And every wind with stoled feet,
In wandering down the alleys sweet,
Steps lightly on the sunshine;

And (having promised Harpocrate

Among the nodding roses, that

No harm shall touch his daughters)

Gives quite away the noisy sound,

He dares not use upon such ground,

To ever-trickling waters.

Yet, sun and wind! what can ye do,
But make the leaves more brightly shew
In posies newly gathered?—
I look away from all your best;
To one poor flower unlike the rest,—
A little flower half-withered.

I do not think it ever was

A pretty flower,—to make the grass
Look greener where it reddened:

And now it seems ashamed to be
Alone in all this company,
Of aspect shrunk and saddened!

A chamber-window was the spot

It grew in, from a garden-pot,
Among the city shadows:

If any, tending it, might seem

To smile, 't was only in a dream

Of nature in the meadows.

How coldly, on its head, did fall

The sunshine, from the city wall,

In pale refraction driven!

How sadly plashed upon its leaves

The raindrops, losing in the eaves

The first sweet news of Heaven!

And those who planted, gathered it
In gamesome or in loving fit,
And sent it as a token
Of what their city pleasures be,—
For one, in Devon by the sea,
And garden-blooms, to look on.

But she, for whom the jest was meant,
With a grave passion innocent
Receiving what was given,—
Oh! if her face she turned then, . . .
Let none say 't was to gaze again
Upon the flowers of Devon!

Because, whatever virtue dwells
In genial skies—warm oracles
For gardens brightly springing,—
The flower which grew beneath your eyes,
Ah sweetest friends, to mine supplies
A beauty worthier singing!

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

"THERE is no God," the foolish saith,—
But none, "There is no sorrow;"
And nature oft, the cry of faith,
In bitter need will borrow:
Eyes which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raised;
And lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praised."
Be pitiful, O God!

The tempest stretches from the steep

The shadow of its coming—

The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,

As help were in the human—

Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind
We spirits tremble under!—
The hills have echoes; but we find
No answer for the thunder.

Be pitiful, O God!

The battle hurtles on the plains—
Earth feels new scythes upon her:
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest..honour,—
Draw face to face, front line to line,
One image all inherit,—
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay, clay,—and spirit, spirit.

Be pitiful, O God 1

The plague runs festering through the town,—
And never a bell is tolling;
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling!
The young child calleth for the cup—
The strong man brings it weeping;

The mother from her babe looks up,

And shrieks away its sleeping.

Be pitiful, O God!

The plague of gold strikes far and near,—
And deep and strong it enters:

This purple chimar which we wear,
Makes madder than the centaur's.

Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange;
We cheer the pale gold-diggers—

Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, with figures.

Be pitiful, O God!

The curse of gold upon the land,

The lack of bread enforces—

The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,

Like more of Death's White Horses!

The rich preach "rights" and future days,

And hear no angel scoffing:

The poor die mute—with starving gaze

On corn-ships in the offing.

Be pitiful, O God!

We meet together at the feast—
To private mirth betake us—
We stare down in the winecup, lest
Some vacant chair should shake us!
We name delight, and pledge it round—
"It shall be ours to-morrow!"
God's seraphs! do your voices sound
As sad in naming sorrow?

Be pitiful, O God!

We sit together, with the skies,

The steadfast skies, above us:

We look into each other's eyes,—

"And how long will you love us?"—

The eyes grew dim with prophecy,

The voices, low and breathless—

"Till*death us part!"—O words, to be

Our best for love the deathless!

Be pitiful, dear God!

We tremble by the harmless bed Of one loved and departedOur tears drop on the lips that said

Last night, "Be stronger hearted!"

O God,—to clasp those fingers close,

And yet to feel so lonely!—

To see a light on dearest brows,

Which is the daylight only!

Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us,

And look up in our faces:

They ask us—Was it thus, and thus,

When we were in their places?

We cannot speak:—we see anew

The hills we used to live in;

And feel our mother's smile press through

The kisses she is giving.

Be pitiful, O God!

We pray together at the kirk,

For mercy, mercy, solely—

Hands weary with the evil work,

We lift them to the Holy!

The corpse is calm below our knee—

Its spirit, bright before Thee—

Between them, worse than either, we—

Without the rest or glory!

Be pitiful, O God!

We leave the communing of men,
The murmur of the passions;
And live alone, to live again
With endless generations.

Are we so brave?—The sea and sky
In silence lift their mirrors;

And, glassed therein, our spirits high Recoil from their own terrors,

Be pitiful, O God!

We sit on hills our childhood wist,

Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding!

The sun strikes, through the farthest mist,

The city's spire to golden.

The city's golden spire it was,

When hope and health were strongest,

But now it is the churchyard grass, We look upon the longest.

Be pitiful, O God!

And soon all vision waxeth dull—
Men whisper, "He is dying:"
We cry no more, "Be pitiful!"—
We have no strength for crying!—
No strength, no need! Then, Soul of mine,
Look up and triumph rather—
Lo! in the depth of God's Divine,
The Son adjures the Father—
BE PITIFUL, O GoD!

A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

— "discordance that can accord."

ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

A rose once grew within
A garden April-green,
In her loneness, in her loneness,
And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate,
On a tall bough and straight!
Early comer, early comer,
Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win South winds to let her in, In her loneness, in her loneness, All the fairer for that oneness. "For if I wait," said she,

"Till times for roses be,—

For the musk-rose and the moss-rose,
Royal-red and maiden blush rose,—

"What glory then for me
In such a company?—
Roses plenty, roses plenty,
And one nightingale for twenty?

"Nay, let me in," said she,

"Before the rest are free,—
In my loneness, in my loneness,
All the fairer for that oneness.

"For I would lonely stand,
Uplifting my white hand,—
On a mission, on a mission,
To declare the coming vision.

"Upon which lifted sign,
What worship will be mine?
What addressing, what caressing!
And what thank, and praise, and blessing!

"A windlike joy will rush
Through every tree and bush,
Bending softly in affection
And spontaneous benediction.

"Insects, that only may
Live in a sunbright ray,
To my whiteness, to my whiteness,
Shall be drawn, as to a brightness,—

"And every moth and bee,
Approach me reverently;
Wheeling o'er me, wheeling o'er me,
Coronals of motioned glory.

"Three larks shall leave a cloud;
To my whiter beauty vowed—
Singing gladly all the moontide,—
Never waiting for the suntide.

"Ten nightingales shall flee
Their woods for love of me,—
Singing sadly all the suntide,
Never waiting for the moontide.

"I ween the very skies
Will look down with surprise,
When low on earth they see me,
With my starry aspect dreamy!

"And earth will call her flowers
To hasten out of doors,—
By their curtsies and sweet-smelling,
To give grace to my foretelling."

So praying, did she win
South winds to let her in,
In her loneness, in her loneness,
And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah !—alas for her !

No thing did minister

To her praises, to her praises,

More than might unto a daisy's.

No tree nor bush was seen

To boast a perfect green;
Scarcely having, scarcely having,
One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl
Along the southern wall,—
Faintly shifting, faintly shifting
Wings scarce strong enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low,

I ween, did miss her so;

With his nest down in the gorses,

And his song in the star-courses!

The nightingale did please
To loiter beyond seas.
Guess him in the happy islands,
Learning music from the silence!

Only the bee, forsooth,

Came in the place of both;

Doing honour, doing honour,

To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down,
As on a royal crown;
Then with drop for drop, at leisure,
They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the earth did seem
To waken from a dream,
Winter-frozen, winter-frozen,
Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose—"Ha, Snow!
And art thou fallen so?
Thou, who wert enthroned stately
All along my mountains, lately?

"Holla, thou world-wide snow!

And art thou wasted so?"

With a little bough to catch thee,

And a little bee to watch thee!"

—Poor Rose to be misknown!
Would, she had ne'er been blown,
In her loneness, in her loneness,—
All the sadder for that oneness!

Some word she tried to say—
Some no...ah, wellaway!

But the passion did o'ercome her,
And the fair frail leaves dropped from her—

Dropped from her, fair and mute, Close to a poet's foot, Who beheld them, smiling slowly, As at something sad yet holy:

Said, "Verily and thus
It chanceth eke with us
Poets singing sweetest snatches,
While that deaf men keep the watches—

"Vaunting to come before
Our own age evermore,
In a loneness, in a loneness,
And the nobler for that oneness!

"Holy in voice and heart,—
To high ends, set apart!

All unmated, all unmated,
Because so consecrated!

"But if alone we be,
Where is our empiry?
And if none can reach our stature,
Who can praise our lofty nature?

"What bell will yield a tone, Swung in the air alone? If no brazen clapper bringing, Who can hear the chimed ringing?

"What angel, but would seem
To sensual eyes, ghost-dim!
And without assimilation,
Vain is inter-penetration!

"And thus, what can we do,
Poor rose and poet too,
Who both antedate our mission
In an unprepared season?

"Dropleaf—be silent song— Cold things we come among! We must warm them, we must warm them, Ere we ever hope to charm them.

"Howbeit" (here his face
Lightened around the place,—
So to mark the outward turning
Of his spirit's inward burning)—

"Something, it is, to hold
In God's worlds manifold,
First revealed to creature-duty,
Some new form of His mild Beauty!

"Whether that form respect
The sense or intellect,
Holy be, in soul or pleasance,
The Chief Beauty's sign of presence!

"Holy, in me and thee,

Rose fallen from the tree,—

Though the world stand dumb around us,
All unable to expound us!

"Though none us deign to bless,
Blessed are we, nathless!
Blessed still, and consecrated,
In that, rose, we were created.

"Oh, shame to poet's lays
Sung for the dole of praise,—
Hoarsely sung upon the highway
With that obulum da mihi.

"Shame, shame to poet's soul,
Pining for such a dole,
When Heaven-chosen to inherit
The high throne of a chief spirit!

"Sit still upon your thrones,
O ye poetic ones!

And if, sooth, the world decry you,
Let it pass, unchallenged by you!

"Ye to yourselves suffice,
Without its flatteries
Self-contentedly approve you
Unto Him who sits above you,—

"In prayers—that upward mount
Like to a fair-sunned fount
Which, in gushing back upon you,
Hath an upper music won you,—

"In faith—that still perceives
No rose can shed her leaves,
Far less, poet fall from mission—
With an unfulfilled fruition!

"In hope—that apprehends
An end beyond these ends;
And great uses rendered duly
By the meanest song sung truly!

"In thanks—for all the good,
By poets understood—
For the sound of seraphs moving
Down the hidden depths of loving,—

"For sights of things away,
Through fissures of the clay,
Promised things which shall be given
And sung over, up in Heaven,—

"For life, so lovely-vain,—
For death, which breaks the chain,—
For this sense of present sweetness,—
And this yearning to completeness!"

BERTHA IN THE LANE.

Pur the broidery-frame away,

For my sewing is all done!

The last thread is used to-day,

And I need not join it on.

Though the clock stands at the noon,

I am weary! I have sewn

Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,

And stand near me, Dearest-sweet!

Do not shrink nor be afraid,

Blushing with a sudden heat!

No one standeth in the street?—

By God's love I go to meet,

Love I thee with love complete.

Lean thy face down! drop it in

These two hands, that I may hold

'Twixt their palms thy cheek and chin,

Stroking back the curls of gold.

'T is a fair, fair face, in sooth—

Larger eyes and redder mouth

Than mine were in my first youth!

Thou art younger by seven years—
Ah!—so bashful at my gaze,
That the lashes, hung with tears,
Grow too heavy to upraise?
I would wound thee by no touch
Which thy shyness feels as such—
Dost thou mind me, Dear, so much?

Have I not been nigh a mother

To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear?

Have we not loved one another

Tenderly, from year to year;

Since our dying mother mild

Said with accents undefiled,

"Child, be mother to this child!"?

Mother, mother, up in heaven,

Stand up on the jasper sea,

And be witness I have given

All the gifts required of me;—

Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,

Love, that left me with a wound,

Life itself, that turned around!

Mother, mother, thou art kind,

Thou art standing in the room,—
In a molten glory shrined,

That rays off into the gloom!

But thy smile is bright and bleak

Like celd waves—I cannot speak;

I sob in it, and grow weak.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof
One hour longer from my soul—
For I still am thinking of
Earth's warm-beating joy and dole!
On my finger is a ring
Which I still see glittering,
When the night hides everything.

Little sister, thou art pale!

Ah, I have a wandering brain—
But I lose that fever-bale,

And my thoughts grow calm again.

Lean down closer—closer still!

I have words thine ear to fill,—

And would kiss thee at my will.

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,

Thee and Robert—through the trees,—

When we all went gathering

Boughs of May-bloom for the bees.

Do not start so! think instead

How the sunshine overhead

Seemed to trickle through the shade.

What a day it was, that day!

Hills and vales did openly

Seem to heave and throb away,

At the sight of the great sky:

And the Silence, as it stood

In the Glory's golden flood,

Audibly did bud—and bud!

Through the winding hedgerows green,

How we wandered, I and you,—

With the bowery tops shut in,

And the gates that showed the view—

How we talked there! thrushes soft

Sang our pauses out,—or oft

Bleatings took them, from the croft.

Till the pleasure, grown too strong,

Left me muter evermore;

And, the winding road being long,

I walked out of sight, before;

And so, wrapt in musings fond,

Issued (past the wayside pond)

On the meadow-lands beyond.

I sat down beneath the beech
Which leans over to the lane,
And the far sound of your speech
Did not promise any pain;
And I blessed you full and free,
With a smile stooped tenderly
O'er the May-flowers on my knee.

But the sound grew into word

As the speakers drew more near—
Sweet, forgive me that I heard

What you wished me not to hear.

Do not weep so—do not shake—
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha, make
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand
In thy thoughts, untouched by blame.
Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim?
That was wrong perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will, again!
Women cannot judge for men.

Had he seen thee, when he swore

He would love but me alone?

Thou wert absent,—sent before

To our kin in Sidmouth town.

When he saw thee who art best

Past compare, and loveliest,

He but judged thee as the rest.

Could we blame him with grave words,
Thou and I, Dear, if we might?
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds,
Flying straightway to the light:
Mine are older.—Hush!—Look out—
Up the street! Is none without?
How the poplar swings about!

And that hour—beneath the beech,—
When I listened in a dream,
And he said, in his deep speech,
That he owed me all esteem,—
Each word swam in on my brain
With a dim, dilating pain,
Till it burst with that last strain—

I fell flooded with a Dark,
In the silence of a swoon—
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night,—I saw the moon:
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart

From myself, when I could stand—
And I pitied my own heart,

As if I held it in my hand,—

Somewhat coldly,—with a sense

Of fulfilled benevolence,

And a "Poor thing" negligence.

And I answered coldly too,

When you met me at the door;

And I only heard the dew

Dripping from me to the floor:

And the flowers I bade you see,

Were too withered for the bee,—

As my life, henceforth, for me.

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm!

It was best as it befell!

If I say he did me harm,

I speak wild,—I am not well.

All his words were kind and good—

He esteemed me! Only blood

Runs so faint in womanhood.

Then I always was too grave,—
Liked the saddest ballads sung,—
With that look, besides, we have
In our faces, who die young.
I had died, Dear, all the same—
Life's long, joyous, jostling game
Is too loud for my meek shame.

We are so unlike each other,

Thou and I; that none could guess

We were children of one mother,

But for mutual tenderness.

Thou art rose-lined from the cold,

And meant, verily, to hold

Life's pure pleasures manifold.

I am pale as crocus grows

Close beside a rose-tree's root!

Whosoe'er would reach the rose,

Treads the crocus underfoot—

I, like May-bloom on thorn-tree—

Thou, like merry summer-bee!

Fit, that I be plucked for thee.

Yet who plucks me?—no one mourns—
I have lived my season out,—
And now die of my own thorns
Which I could not live without.
Sweet, be merry! How the light
Comes and goes! If it be night,
Keep the candles in my sight.

Are there footsteps at the door?

Look out quickly. Yea, or nay?

Some one might be waiting for

Some last word that I might say.

Nay? So best!—So angels would

Stand off clear from deathly road,—

Not to cross the sight of God.

Colder grow my hands and feet—
When I wear the shroud I made,
Let the folds lie straight and neat,
And the rosemary be spread,—
That if any friend should come,
(To see thee, sweet!) all the room
May be lifted out of gloom.

And, dear Bertha, let me keep
On my hand this little ring,
Which at nights, when others sleep,
I can still see glittering.
Let me wear it out of sight,
In the grave,—where it will light
All the Dark up, day and night.

On that grave, drop not a tear!

Else, though fathom-deep the place,
Through the woollen shroud I wear,
I shall feel it on my face.

Rather smile there, blessed one,
Thinking of me in the sun—
Or forget me—smiling on!

Art thou near me? nearer? so!

Kiss me close upon the eyes,—

That the earthly light may go

Sweetly as it used to rise,—

When I watched the morning-gray

Strike, betwixt the hills, the way

He was sure to come that day.

So,—no more vain words be said!

The hosannas nearer roll—

Mother, smile now on thy Dead,—

I am death-strong in my soul!

Mýstic Dove alit on cross,

Guide the poor bird of the snows

Through the snow-wind above loss!

Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,—
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,
And absorb the poor libation!
Wind my thread of life up higher,
Up through angels' hands of fire!—
I aspire while I expire!—

THAT DAY.

FOR MUSIC.

I stand by the river where both of us stood,
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood;
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,
Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass,—
One forlorn since that day.

The flowers of the margin are many to see,

For none stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me;

The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,

For my low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,

As thy vow did that day!

I stand by the river—I think of the vow—
Oh, calm as the place is vow-breaker, be thou!
I leave the flower growing—the bird, unreproved,—
Would I trouble thee rather than them, my beloved,
And my loving that day?

- Go! be sure of my love—by that treason forgiven,—
- Of my prayers—by the blessings they win thee from Heaven,—
- Of my grief (guess the length of the sword by the sheath's)---
- By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's,— Go,—be clear of that day!

LOVED ONCE.

I classed, appraising once,
Earth's lamentable sounds; the welladay,
The jarring yea and nay,
The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,
The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller;—
But all did leaven the air
With a less bitter leaven of sure despair,
Than these words—'I loved once.'

And who saith, 'I loved ONCE?'

Not angels, whose clear eyes, love, love, foresee,

Love through eternity!

Who, by To Love, do apprehend To Be.

Not God, called Love, his noble crown-name,—casting

A light too broad for blasting!

The great God changing not from everlasting,

Saith never, 'I loved ONCE.'

Nor ever the 'Loved once,'

Dost thou say, Victim-Christ, misprized friend!

The cross and curse may rend;

But, having loved, Thou lovest to the end!

It is man's saying—man's! Too weak to move

One sphered star above,

Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love

With his No More, and Once.

How say ye, 'We loved once,'

Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,

Mourners, without that snow?

Ah, friends! and would ye wrong each other so?

And could ye say of some, whose love is known,

Whose prayers have met your own,

Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have shone,

Such words, 'We loved them once?'

Could ye, 'We loved her once,'
Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight?

When hearts of better right
Stand in between me and your happy light?

And when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,
Ye find my colours fade,
And all that is not love in me, decayed!
Such words—Ye loved me once?

Could ye 'We loved her once,'
Say cold of me, when further put away
In earth's sepulchral clay?
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day?—
Not so! not then—least then! when Life is shriven,
And Death's full joy is given,—
Of those who sit and love you up in Heaven,
Say not, 'We loved them once.'

Say never, ye loved ONCE!

God is too near above, the grave, below,

And all our moments go

Too quickly past our souls, for saying so!

The mysteries of Life and Death avenge

Affections light of range—

There comes no change to justify that change,

Whatever comes—Loved ONCE!

And yet that word of once

Is humanly acceptive! Kings have said,

Shaking a discrowned head,

'We ruled once,'-idiot tongues, 'We once bested,'-

Cripples once danced i' the vines—and bards approved,

Were once by scornings, moved!

But love strikes one hour—LOVE. Those never loved,

Who dream that they loved once.

A RHAPSODY OF LIFE'S PROGRESS.

"Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath."

POEMS ON MAN, BY CORNELIUS MATHEWS.*

WE are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange!
We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery,

Which smiles with a change!

But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces;
The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,
And we think we could touch all the stars that we see;
And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth!
And, with small childish hands, we are turning around
The apple of Life which another has found:—
It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,
And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four—

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore.

^{*} A small volume, by an American poet—as remarkable, in thought and manner, for a vital sinewy vigour, as the right arm of Pathfinder.

Then all things look strange in the pure golden ether:
We walk through the gardens with hands linked together,

And the lilies look large as the trees;

And as loud as the birds, sing the bloom-loving bees,—

And the birds sing like angels, so mystical fine;

And the cedars are brushing the archangel's feet;

And time is eternity,—love is divine,

And the world is complete!

Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond.

O Life O Beyond

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet.

Then we leap on the earth with the armour of youth,

And the earth rings again!

And we breathe out, 'O beauty,'—we cry out, 'O truth,'
And the bloom of our lips drops with wine;

And our blood runs amazed 'neath the calm hyaline,-

The earth cleaves to the foot, the sun burns to the brain,—

What is this exultation, and what this despair—
The strong pleasure is smiting the nerves into pain,
And we drop from the Fair, as we climb to the Fair,
And we lie in a trance at its feet;

And the breath of an angel cold-piercing the air

Breathes fresh on our faces in swoon;

And we think him so near, he is this side the sun!

And we wake to a whisper self-murmured and fond,

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures Go winding around us, with roll upon roll, Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures,

Which hideth the soul!

And we run with the stag, and we leap with the horse,
And we swim with the fish through the strong watercourse,

And we strike with the falcon, and hunt with the hound,
And the joy which is in us, flies out with a wound;
And we shout so aloud, 'We exult, we rejoice.'

That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,—
And we shout so adeep down creation's profound,

We are deaf to God's voice—

And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears,

Yet we are not ashamed;

And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed

Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.

Help us God, trust us man, love us woman! 'I hold

Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold

Growing bright through my fingers,—like altar for oath,

'Neath the vast golden spaces like witnessing faces

That watch the eternity strong in the troth—

I love thee, I leave thee,—
Live for thee, die for thee!
I prove thee, deceive thee,—
Undo evermore thee!

Help me God, slay me man!—one is mourning for both!'

And we stand up, though young, near the funeral-sheet
Which covers the Cæsar and old Pharamond;
And death is so nigh us, Life cools from its heat—

O Life, O Beyond,

Art thou fair,—art thou sweet?

Then we act to a purpose—we spring up erect— We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness-steeds; We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked; We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,—
Strike the steel upon steel, strike the soul upon soul.
Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole,—
Let the cloud meet the cloud in a grand thunder-roll!
While the eagle of Thought rides the tempest in scorn,
Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn?

'Let us sit on the thrones
In a purple sublimity,
And grind down men's bones
To a pale unanimity!

Speed me, God!—serve me, man!—I am god over men!

When I speak in my cloud, none shall answer again—
'Neath the stripe and the bond,

Lie and mourn at my feet!'—
O thou Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Then we grow into thought,—and with inward ascensions,

Touch the bounds of our Being!

We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around

With our sensual relations and social conventions,—

Yet are 'ware of a sight, yet are 'ware of a sound
Beyond Hearing and Seeing,—

Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides,

With its infinite tides.

About and above us,—until the strong arch

Of our life creaks and bends as if ready for falling,

And through all the dim rolling, we hear the sweet calling

Of spirits that speak, in a soft under-tongue,

The interpretive sense of the mystical march:

And we cry to them softly, 'Come nearer, come nearer,

'And lift up the lap of this Dark, and speak clearer,

'And teach us the song that ye sung.'

And we smile in our thought, if they answer or no,—

For to dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know!

Wonders breathe in our face,

And we ask not their name;

And Love takes all the blame

Of the world's prison-place.

And we sing back the songs as we guess them, aloud;

And we send up the lark of our music that cuts

Untired through the cloud,

To beat with its wings at the lattice Heaven shuts: Yet the angels look down, and the mortals look up,

As the little wings beat,

And the poet is blessed with their pity or hope.

'Twixt the Heavens and the earth, can a poet despond?

O Life, O Beyond,

Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Then we wring from our souls their applicative strength,
And bend to the cord the strong bow of our ken;
And bringing our lives to the level of others,
Hold the cup we have filled, to their uses at length.
'Help me, God! love me, man! I am man among men,—

And my life is a pledge
Of the ease of another's!'

From the fire and the water we drive out the steam, With a rush and a roar, and the speed of a dream! And the car without horses, the car without wings,

> Roars onward and flies On its pale iron edge,

'Neath the heat of a Thought sitting still in our eyes— And the hand knots in air, with the bridge that it flings, Two peaks far disrupted by ocean and skies,—
And, lifting a fold of the smooth-flowing Thames,
Draws under, the world, with its turmoils and pothers;
While the swans float on softly, untouched in their calms
By Humanity's hum at the root of the springs!
And with reachings of Thought we reach down to the
deeps

Of the souls of our brothers,
And teach them full words with our slow-moving lips,
'God,' 'Liberty,' 'Truth,'—which they hearken and
think,

And work into harmony, link upon link,

Till the silver meets round the earth gelid and dense,

Shedding sparks of electric respondence intense

On the dark of eclipse.

Then we hear through the silence and glory afar,

As from shores of a star

In aphelion,—the new generations that cry

In attune to our voice and harmonious reply,

'God,' 'Liberty,' 'Truth!'
We are glorious forsooth—
And our name has a seat,

Though the shroud should be donned!

O Life, O Beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Help me, God—help me, man! I am low, I am weak—Death loosens my sinews and creeps in my veins;
My body is cleft by these wedges of pains,

From my spirit's serene;

And I feel the externe and insensate creep in

On my organized clay.

I sob not, nor shriek,

Yet I faint fast away!

I am strong in the spirit,—deep-thoughted, clear-eyed,—I could walk, step for step, with an angel beside,

On the Heaven-heights of Truth!

Oh, the soul keeps its youth-

But the body faints sore, it is tired in the race,—

It sinks from the chariot ere reaching the goal;

It is weak, it is cold,

The rein drops from its hold-

It sinks back, with the death in its face!

On, chariot-on, soul,-

Ye are all the more fleet— Be alone at the goal Of the strange and the sweet!

Love us, God, love us, man! we believe, we achieve—

Let us love, let us live,

For the acts correspond—

We are glorious—and DIE!

And again on the knee of a mild Mystery

That smiles with a change,

Here we lie!

O DEATH, O BEYOND,

Thou art sweet, thou art strange!

L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTIO

"Do you think of me as I think of you?" From her poem written during the voyage to the Cape.

'Do you think of me as I think of you,
My friends, my friends?'—She said it from the sea,
The English minstrel in her minstrelsy;
While, under brighter skies than erst she knew,
Her heart grew dark,—and groped there, as the blind,
To reach, across the waves, friends left behind—
'Do you think of me as I think of you?'

It seemed not much to ask—As I of you?—
We all do ask the same. No eyelids cover
Within the meekest eyes, that question over,—
And little, in the world, the Loving do,
But sit (among the rocks?) and listen for
The echo of their own love evermore—
'Do you think of me as I think of you?'

Love-learned, she had sung of love and love,—
And, like a child, that, sleeping with dropt head
Upon the fairy-book he lately read,
Whatever household noises round him move,
Hears in his dream some elfin turbulence,—
Even so, suggestive to her inward sense,
All sounds of life assumed one tune of love.

And when the glory of her dream withdrew,—
When knightly gestes and courtly pageantries
Were broken in her visionary eyes,
By tears the solemn seas attested true,—
Forgetting that sweet lute beside her hand,
She asked not,—Do you praise me, O my land?—
But,—'Think ye of me, friends, as I of you?'

Hers was the hand that played for many a year,
Love's silver phrase for England,—smooth and well!
Would God, her heart's more inward oracle
In that lone moment, might confirm her dear!
For when her questioned friends in agony
Made passionate response,—'We think of thee,'—
Her place was in the dust, too deep to hear.

Could she not wait to catch their answering breath? Was she content—content—with ocean's sound, Which dashed its mocking infinite around One thirsty for a little love?—beneath Those stars, content,—where last her song had gone,—They, mute and cold in radiant life,—as soon Their singer was to be, in darksome death?*

Bring your vain answers—cry, 'We think of thee!'
How think ye of her? warm in long ago
Delights?—or crowned with budding bays? Not so.
None smile and none are crowned where lieth she,—
With all her visions unfulfilled, save one—
Her childhood's—of the palm-trees in the sun—
And lo! their shadow on her sepulchre!

'Do ye think of me as I think of you?'—
O friends,—O kindred,—O dear brotherhood
Of all the world! what are we, that we should

^{*} Her lyric on the polar star came home with her latest papers.

For covenants of long affection sue?

Why press so near each other, when the touch
Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much,
Is this 'Think of me as I think of you.'

But while on mortal lips I shape anew
A sigh to mortal issues,—verily
Above the unshaken stars that see us die,
A vocal pathos rolls! and HE who drew
All life from dust, and for all, tasted death,
By death and life and love, appealing, saith,
Do you think of me as I think of you?

THE HOUSE OF CLOUDS.

I would build a cloudy House
For my thoughts to live in:
When for earth too fancy-loose,
And too low for Heaven!
Hush! I talk my dream aloud—
I build it bright to see,—
Build it on the moonlit cloud,
To which I looked with thee.

Cloud-walls of the morning's gray,
Faced with amber column,—
Crowned with crimson cupola
From a sunset solemn!
May-mists, for the easements, fetch,
Pale and glimmering;
With a sunbeam hid in each,
And a smell of spring.

Build the entrance high and proud,

Darkening and eke brightening,—

Of a riven thunder-cloud,

Veined by the lightning!

Use one with an iris-stain,

For the door within;

Turning to a sound like rain,

As we enter in!

Enter a broad hall thereby,

Walled with cloudy whiteness:

'T is a blue place of the sky,

Wind-worked into brightness;

Whence such corridors sublime

Stretch, with winding stairs—

Praying children wish to climb

After their own prayers.

In the mutest of the house,

I will have my chamber:

Round its door I keep for use

Northern lights of amber.

Silence gave that rose and bee For the lock, in meteness; And the turning of the key Goes in humming sweetness.

Be my chamber tapestried

With the showers of summer,

Close but soundless,—glorified

When the sunbeams come here—

Wandering harpers, harping on

Chorded drops, as such,—

Drawing colours, for a tune,

With a vibrant touch.

Bring a shadow green and still
From the chesnut forest,—
Bring a purple from the hill,
When the heat is sorest,—
Spread them out from wall to wall,
Carpet-wove around,—
Whereupon the foot shall fall
In light instead of sound.

Bring the fantasque cloudlets home,
From the noontide zenith;
Ranged, for sculptures, round the room,—
Named as Fancy weeneth:
Some be Junos, without eyes—
Naiads, without sources—
Some be birds of paradise,—
Some, Olympian horses.

Bring the dews the birds shake off,
Waking in the hedges,—
Those too, perfumed for a proof,
From the lilies' edges:
From our England's field and moor,
Bring them calm and white in,—
Whence to form a mirror pure,
For Love's self-delighting!

Bring a gray cloud from the east,
Where the lark is singing,—
Something of the song at least,
Unlost in the bringing:

That shall be a morning chair,
Poet-dream may sit in,
When it leans out on the air,
Unrhymed and unwritten.

Bring the red cloud from the sun!

While he sinketh, catch it—

That shall be a couch,—with one
Sidelong star to watch it,—

Fit for poet's finest Thought,
At the curfew-sounding,—

Things unseen being nearer brought
Than the seen, around him.

Poet's thought,—not poet's sigh!

'Las, they come together!

Cloudy walls divide and fly,

As in April weather!

Corridor and column proud,

Chamber bright to see—

Gone!—except that moonlit cloud,

To which I looked with thee!

Let them! Wipe such visionings
From the Fancy's cartel—
Love secures some fairer things
Dowered with his immortal!
Suns may darken,—heaven be bowed—
Still, unchanged shall be,—
Soul-deep,—here—that moonlit cloud,
To which I looked with THER!

CATARINA TO CAMOËNS.

DYING IN HIS ABSENCE ABROAD, AND REFERRING TO THE POEM IN WHICH HE RECORDED THE SWEETNESS OF HER EYES.

On the door you will not enter,

I have gazed too long—adieu!

Hope withdraws her peradventure—

Death is near me,—and not you!

Come, O lover!

Close and cover

These poor eyes, you called, I ween,
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

When I heard you sing that burden
In my vernal days and bowers,
Other praises disregarding,
I but hearkened that of yours,—

Only saying
In heart-playing,
'Blessed eyes mine eyes have been,
If the sweetest, HIS have seen!'

But all changeth! At this vesper,

Cold the sun shines down the door!

If you stood there, would you whisper

'Love, I love you,' as before,—

Death pervading

Now, and shading

Eyes you sang of, that yestreen,

As the sweetest, ever seen?

Yes! I think, were you beside them,

Near the bed I die upon,—

Though their beauty you denied them,

As you stood there, looking down,

You would truly

Call them duly,

For the love's sake found therein,—

'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

And if you looked down upon them,
And if they looked up to you,
All the light which has forgone them
Would be gathered back anew!
They would truly
Be as duly
Love-transformed to Beauty's sheen,—
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

But, ah me! you only see me
In your thoughts of loving man,
Smiling soft perhaps and dreamy
Through the wavings of my fan,—
And unweeting
Go repeating,
In your reverie serene,
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

While my spirit leans and reaches
From my body still and pale,
Fain to hear what tender speech is
In your love, to help my bale—

O my poet,

Come and show it!

Come, of latest love, to glean
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

O my poet, O my prophet,

When you praised their sweetness so,
Did you think, in singing of it,

That it might be near to go?

Had you fancies

From their glances,

That the grave would quickly screen

'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?'

No reply! The fountains warble
In the court-yard sounds alone!
As the water to the marble
So my heart falls with a moan,
From love-sighing
To this dying!
Death forerunneth Love, to win

'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

Will you come? when I'm departed
Where all sweetnesses are hid—
When thy voice, my tender-hearted,
Will not lift up either lid.

Cry, O lover,
Love is over!

Cry beneath the cypress green'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

When the angelus is ringing,

Near the convent will you walk,

And recall the choral singing

Which brought angels down our talk?

Spirit-shriven

I viewed Heaven,

Till you smiled—'Is earth unclean,
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?

When beneath the palace-lattice,
You ride slow as you have done,
And you see a face there—that is
Not the old familiar one,—

Will you oftly Murmur softly,

'Here, ye watched me morn and e'en, Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!'

When the palace ladies sitting
Round your gittern, shall have said,
'Poet, sing those verses written
For the lady who is dead,'—
Will you tremble,
Yet dissemble,—

Or sing hoarse, with tears between, 'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?'

Sweetest eyes! How sweet in flowings,

The repeated cadence is!

Though you sang a hundred poems,

Still the best one would be this.

I can hear it
'Twixt my spirit

And the earth-noise, intervene—
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!'

But the priest waits for the praying,

And the choir are on their knees,—

And the soul must pass away in

Strains more solemn high than these!

Miserere

For the weary—
Oh, no longer for Catrine,
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!'

Keep my riband! take and keep it,—
I have loosed it from my hair;*
Feeling, while you overweep it,
Not alone in your despair,—
Since with saintly
Watch, unfaintly,
Out of Heaven shall o'er you lean
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.'

But—but now—yet unremoved
Up to Heaven, they glisten fast—
You may cast away, Beloved,
In your future, all my past;

^{*} She left him the riband from her hair.

Such old phrases

May be praises

For some fairer bosom-queen—

'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!'

Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?

Faithless, faithless,—praised amiss,

If a tear be of your showing,

Drop for any hope of HIS!

Death hath boldness

Besides coldness,

If unworthy tears demean

Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.

I will look out to his future—
I will bless it till it shine!
Should he ever be a suitor
Unto sweeter eyes than mine,
Sunshine gild them,
Angels shield them,
Whatsoever eyes terrene
Be the sweetest his have seen!

A PORTRAIT.

" One name is Elizabeth."-BEN JONSON.

I will paint her as I see her!

Ten times have the lilies blown,
Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear—

Lily-shaped, and drooped in duty

To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks, encoloured faintly,
Which a trail of golden hair
Keeps from fading off to air!

And a forehead fair and saintly,

Which two blue eyes undershine,

Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—

Though too calm, you think, and tender,

For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child-simple, undefiled,
Frank, obedient,—waiting still
On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things—
As young birds, or early wheat
When the wind blows over it.

Only free from flutterings

Of loud mirth that scorneth measure—

Taking love for her chief pleasure!

Choosing pleasures (for the rest)
Which come softly—just as she,
When she nestles at your knee!

Quiet talk she liketh best,

In a bower of gentle looks,—

Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,

As a silver stream may run,

Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile, it seems half holy,

As if drawn from thoughts more far

Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her,

He would sing of her with falls

Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her,

He would paint her unaware
With a halo round her hair.

And if reader read the poem,

He would whisper—"You have done a

Consecrated little Una!"

And a dreamer (did you show him

That same picture) would exclaim,
"'T is my angel, with a name!"

And a stranger,—when he sees her
In the street even—smileth stilly,
Just as you would at a lily.

And all voices that address her,
Soften, sleeken, every word,—
As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover

The hard earth whereon she passes,
With the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray, 'God love her!'—
Ay, and certes, in good sooth,
We may all be sure He DOTH.

SLEEPING AND WATCHING.

SLEEP on, Baby, on the floor, Tired of all the playing,-Sleep with smile the sweeter for That you dropped away in! On your curls' full roundness, stand Golden lights serenely-One cheek, pushed out by the hand, Folds the dimple inly: Little head and little foot Heavy laid for pleasure, Underneath the lids half-shut, Slants the shining azure ;-Open-souled in noonday sun, So, you lie and slumber! Nothing evil, having done, Nothing can encumber.

I, who cannot sleep as well,
Shall I sigh to view you?
Or sigh further to foretell
All that may undo you?
Nay, keep smiling, little child,
Ere the sorrow neareth,—
I will smile too! Patience mild
Pleasure's token weareth.
Nay, keep sleeping, before loss;
I shall sleep though losing!
As by cradle, so by cross,
Sure is the reposing.

And God knows, who sees us twain,
Child at childish leisure,
I am near as tired of pain
As you seem of pleasure;—
Very soon too, by His grace
Gently wrapt around me,
Shall I show as calm a face,
Shall I sleep as soundly!
Differing in this, that you
Clasp your playthings sleeping,

While my hand shall drop the few Given to my keeping;
Differing in this, that I Sleeping, shall be colder,
And in waking presently,
Brighter to beholder!
Differing in this beside
(Sleeper, have you heard me?
Do you move, and open wide
Eyes of wonder toward me?)—
That while I, you, draw withal
From your slumber, solely,—
Me, from mine, an angel shall,
With reveillie holy!

WINE OF CYPRUS.

GIVEN TO ME BY H. S. BOYD, ESQ., AUTHOR OF "SELECT PASSAGES FROM THE GREEK FATHERS," ETC., TO WHOM THESE STANZAS ARE ADDRESSED.

Ir old Bacchus were the speaker

He would tell you with a sigh,

Of the Cyprus in this beaker,

I am sipping like a fly,—

Like a fly or gnat on Ida

At the hour of goblet-pledge,

By queen Juno brushed aside, a

Full white arm-sweep, from the edge!

Sooth, the drinking should be ampler,

When the drink is so divine;

And some deep-mouthed Greek exemplar

Would become your Cyprian wine!

Cyclop's mouth might plunge aright in,
While his one eye over-leered—
Nor too large were mouth of Titan,
Drinking rivers down his beard.

Pan might dip his head so deep in,

That his ears alone pricked out;

Fauns around him, pressing, leaping,

Each one pointing to his throat!

While the Naiads like Bacchantes,

Wild, with urns thrown out to waste,

Cry—'O earth, that thou wouldst grant us

Springs to keep, of such a taste!'

But for me, I am not worthy

After gods and Greeks to drink;

And my lips are pale and earthy,

To go bathing from this brink!

Since you heard them speak the last time,

They have faded from their blooms;

And the laughter of my pastime

Has learnt silence at the tombs.

Ah, my friend! the antique drinkers

Crowned the cup and crowned the brow!

Can I answer the old thinkers

In the forms they thought of, now?

Who will fetch from garden-closes

Some new garlands while I speak,

That the forehead, crowned with roses,

May strike scarlet down the cheek?

Do not mock me! with my mortal,
Suits no wreath again, indeed!
I am sad-voiced as the turtle,
Which Anacreon used to feed:
Yet as that same bird demurely
Wet her beak in cup of his,—
So, without a garland, surely
I may touch the brim of this.

Go!—let others praise the Chian!—
This is soft as Muses' string—
This is tawny as Rhea's lion
This is rapid as its spring,—

Bright as Paphia's eyes e'er met us,
Light as ever trod her feet!

And the brown bees of Hymettus
Make their honey, not so sweet.

Very copious are my praises,

Though I sip it like a fly!—

Ah—but, sipping,—times and places
Change before me suddenly—

As Ulysses' old libation
Drew the ghosts from every part,
So your Cyprian wine, dear Græcian,
Stirs the Hades of my heart.

And I think of those long mornings
Which my Thought goes far to seek,
When, betwixt the folio's turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.
Past the pane, the mountain spreading,
Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,
While a girlish voice was reading,—
Somewhat low for ais and ois!

Then what golden hours were for us!—
While we sat together there,
How the white vests of the chorus
Seemed to wave up a live air!
How the cothurns trod majestic
Down the deep iambic lines!
And the rolling anapæstic
Curled, like vapour over shrines!

Oh, our Æschylus, the thundrous!

How he drove the bolted breath

Through the cloud, to wedge it ponderous
In the gnarled oak beneath.

Oh, our Sophocles, the royal!

Who was born to monarch's place—

And who made the whole world loyal,
Less by kingly power than grace.

Our Euripides, the human—
With his droppings of warm tears;
And his touches of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres!

Our Theocritus, our Bion,

And our Pindar's shining goals!—

These were cup-bearers undying,

Of the wine that's meant for souls.

And my Plato, the divine one,—

If men know the gods aright

By their motions as they shine on

With a glorious trail of light!—

And your noble Christian bishops,

Who mouthed grandly the last Greek!

Though the sponges on their hyssops

Were distent with wine—too weak!

Yet, your Chrysostom, you praised him,
With his glorious mouth of gold—
And your Basil, you upraised him
To the height of speakers old!
And we both praised Heliodorus
For his secret of pure lies!—
Who forged first his linked stories
In the heat of lady's eyes.

And we both praised your Synesius,

For the fire shot up his odes!

Though the church was scarce propitious,
As he whistled dogs and gods.—

And we both praised Nazianzen,
For the fervid heart and speech!

Only I eschewed his glancing
At the lyre, hung out of reach.

Do you mind that deed of Até,

Which you bound me to, so fast,—
Reading "De Virginitate,"

From the first line to the last?

How I said at ending, solemn,

As I turned and looked at you,

That St. Simeon on the column

Had had somewhat less to do?

For we sometimes gently wrangled;

Very gently, be it said,—

For our thoughts were disentangled

By no breaking of the thread!

And, I charged you with extortions
On the nobler fames of old—
Ay, and sometimes thought your Porsons
Stained the purple they would fold.

For the rest!—a mystic moaning,

Kept Cassandra at the gate!

With wild eyes the vision shone in—

And wide nostrils scenting fate!

And Prometheus, bound in passion

By brute force to the blind stone,

Showed us looks of invocation

Turned to ocean and the sun.

And Medea we saw, burning

At her nature's planted stake!

And proud Œdipus, fate-scorning,

While the cloud came on to brake—

While the cloud came on slow—slower,

Till he stood discrowned, resigned!—

But the reader's voice dropped lower,

When the poet called him BLIND!

Ah, my gossip! you were older,
And more learned, and a man!—
Yet that shadow,—the enfolder
Of your quiet eyelids,—ran
Both our spirits to one level;
And I turned from hill and lea
And the summer-sun's green revel,—
To your eyes that could not see.

Now Christ bless you with the one light
Which goes shining night and day!

May the flowers which grow in sunlight
Shed their fragrance in your way!

Is it not right to remember
All your kindness, friend of mine,—
When we two sat in the chamber,
And the poets poured us wine?

So, to come back to the drinking
Of this Cyprus!—it is well—
But those memories, to my thinking,
Make a better cenomel!

And whoever be the speaker,

None can murmur with a sigh,—

That, in drinking from that beaker,

I am sipping like a fly!

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

So the dreams depart, So the fading phantoms flee, And the sharp reality Now must act its part.

WESTWOOD'S 'BEADS FROM A ROSARY.'

LITTLE Ellie sits alone Mid the beeches of a meadow, By a stream-side, on the grass: And the trees are showering down Doubles of their leaves in shadow, On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by: And her feet she has been dipping In the shallow water's flow-Now she holds them nakedly In her hands, all sleek and dripping, While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,—
And the smile, she softly useth,
Fills the silence like a speech;
While she thinks what shall be done,—
And the sweetest pleasure, chooseth,
For her future within reach!

Little Ellie in her smile

Chooseth...'I will have a lover,

Riding on a steed of steeds!

He shall love me without guile;

And to him I will discover

That swan's nest among the reeds.

'And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath,—
And the lute he plays upon,
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

'And the steed, it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind!
And the hoofs along the sod,
Shall flash onward in a pleasure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

'But my lover will not prize

All the glory that he rides in,

When he gazes in my face!

He will say, "O Love, thine eyes

Build the shrine my soul abides in;

And I kneel here for thy grace."

'Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low,—With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand—
Till I answer, "Rise, and go!
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand."

'Then he will arise so pale,

I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a yes I must not say—
Nathless, maiden-brave, "Farewell,"

I will utter and dissemble—
"Light to-morrow, with to-day."

'Then he will ride through the hills,
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong!
To make straight distorted wills,—
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

'Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream, and climb the mountain,
And kneel down beside my feet—
"Lo! my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?"

'And the first time, I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,—
And the second time, a glove!
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—"Pardon—
If he comes to take my love."

'Then the young foot-page will run—
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee!
"I am a duke's eldest son!
Thousand serfs do call me master,—
But, O Love, I love but thee!"

'He will kiss me on the mouth
Then; and lead me as a lover,
Through the crowds that praise his deeds!
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto him I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.'

Little Ellie, with her smile

Not yet ended, rose up gayly,—

Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe—

And went homeward, round a mile,

Just to see, as she did daily,

What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse
Winding by the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads—
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops!
Lo! the wild swan had deserted—
And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

Ellie went home sad and slow!

If she found the lover ever,

With his red-roan steed of steeds,

Sooth I know not! but I know

She could show him never—never,

That swan's nest among the reeds!

LESSONS FROM THE GORSE.

"To win the secret of a weed's plain heart." Lowell.

Mountain gorses, ever-golden!

Cankered not the whole year long!

Do you teach us to be strong,

Howsoever pricked and holden

Like your thorny blooms, and so

Trodden on by rain and snow,

Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms!

Do ye teach us to be glad

When no summer can be had,

Blooming in our inward bosoms?

Ye, whom God preserveth still,

Set as lights upon a hill,

Tokens to the wintry earth, that Beauty liveth still!

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us
From that academic chair
Canopied with azure air,
That the first fruit Wisdom reaches
Hath the hue of childly cheek?
Ye, who live on mountain peak,

Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek!

Mountain gorses! since Linnæus
Knelt beside you on the sod,
For your beauty thanking God,—
For your teaching, ye should see us
Bowing in prostration new,—
Whence arisen,—if one or two

Drops be on our cheeks—O world! they are not tears, but dew.

THE DEAD PAN.

Excited by Schiller's "Götter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu,") according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller, that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

As Mr. Kenyon's graceful and harmonious paraphrase of the German poem was the first occasion of the turning of my thoughts in this direction, I take advantage of the pretence to indulge my feelings (which overflow on other grounds) by inscribing my lyric to that dear friend and relative, with the earnestness of appreciating esteem as well as of affectionate gratitude. E. B. B.

Gops of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken
In old Ethiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,—
And so kept alive and fine?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses

Where the silver spheres roll on,

Stung to life by centric forces

Thrown like rays out from the sun?—

While the smoke of your old altars

Is the shroud that round you welters?

Great Pan is dead.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Said the old Hellenic tongue!
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung'!
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay—
Since Pan is dead?

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
All alone, O Naiades,
While your drenched locks dry slow in
This cold feeble sun and breeze?

Not a word the Naiads say, Though the rivers run for aye.

For Pan is dead.

From the gloaming of the oak wood,
O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
At the rushing thunderstroke, would
No sob tremble through the tree?—
Not a word the Dryads say,
Though the forests wave for aye.

For Pan is dead.

Have ye left the mountain places,
Oreads wild, for other tryst?
Shall we see no sudden faces
Strike a glory through the mist?
Not a sound the silence thrills,
Of the everlasting hills.

Pan, Pan is dead.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision, Crowned to starry wanderings,— With your chariots in procession, And your silver clash of wings! Very pale ye seem to rise, Ghosts of Grecian deities—

Now Pan is dead!

Jove, that right hand is unloaded, Whence the thunder did prevail: While in idiocy of godhead, Thou art staring the stars pale! And thine eagle, blind and old, Roughs his feathers in the cold.

Pan, Pan is dead,

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread!
Will they lay, for evermore, thee,
On thy dim, straight golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo! Floats his golden
Hair, all mist-like where he stands;
While the muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe looked lost as thou!

Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,
Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse,—
And no hero take inspiring
From the God-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons,—bound with his own vines!
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly,—
"Evohe—ah—evohe—!"

Ah, Pan is dead.

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone:
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun.
Ceres smileth stern thereat,—
"We all now are desolate—"

Now Pan is dead.

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art,
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thy heart!
Ai Adonis! At that shriek,
Not a tear runs down her cheek—

Pan, Pan is dead. '

And the Loves we used to know from One another,—huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly,—
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.

Pan, Pan is dead.

What, and Hermes! Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,—
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus!
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay, Pan is dead.

Crowned Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head:
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed:
Scornful children are not mute,—
"Mother, mother, walk a-foot—

Since Pan is dead."

In the fiery-hearted centre
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta,—who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy gray chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!

For Pan is dead.

Gods! we vainly do adjure you,—
Ye return nor voice nor sign:
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine!
Not a grave, to show thereby,
Here these gray old gods do lie!

Pan, Pan is dead.

Even that Greece who took your wages,
Calls the obolus outworn:
And the hoarse deep-throated ages
Laugh your godship unto scorn—
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow colder if they name you—

And Pan is dead.

Gods bereaved, gods belated,—
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—

Now Pan is dead.

Calm at eve the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind,
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
From the piled Dark behind:
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the rowers from the benches
Fell,—each shuddering on his face—
While departing influences
Struck a cold back through the place:
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—

Pan, Pan is dead.

And that dismal cry rose slowly,

And sank slowly through the air;

Full of spirit's melancholy

And eternity's despair!

And they heard the words it said—

PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—

PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

'T was the hour when One in Sion

Hung for love's sake on a cross—

When His brow was chill with dying,

And His soul was faint with loss;

When his priestly blood dropped downward,

And his kingly eyes looked throneward—

Then, Pan was dead.

By the leve He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead stood complete:
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat—
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—

Pan, Pan was dead.

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine!
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine:
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only.

Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered,—feeling o'er her,
Her lost god's forsaking look!
Straight her eye-balls filmed with horror
And her crispy fillets shook—
And her lips gasped through their foam,
For a word that did not come.

Pan, Pan was dead.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice;
Whence libations ran of yore.
See! the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike—as your glories must!
Since Pan is dead.

Get to dust, as common mortals, By a common doom and track! Let no Schiller from the portals Of that Hades, call you back,— Or instruct us to weep all At your antique funeral.

Pan, Pan is dead.

By your beauty, which confesses

Some chief Beauty conquering you,—

By our grand heroic guesses,

Through your falsehood, at the True,—

We will weep not...! earth shall roll

Heir to each God's aureole—

And Pan is dead.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth:
And those debonaire romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phæbus' chariot-course is run!
Look up, poets, to the sun!

Pan, Pan is dead.

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessed mysteries:
And a Priest's Hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration—
And Pan is dead.

Truth is fair: should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.
Sing His truth out fair and full,
And secure His beautiful.

Let Pan be dead.

Truth is large. Our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame! to stand in His creation
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!—
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling—

When Pan is dead.

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure—
All of praise that hath admonish'd,—
All of virtue, shall endure,—
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses,
Ere Pan was dead.

O brave poets, keep back nothing;

Nor mix falsehood with the whole!

Look up Godward! speak the truth in

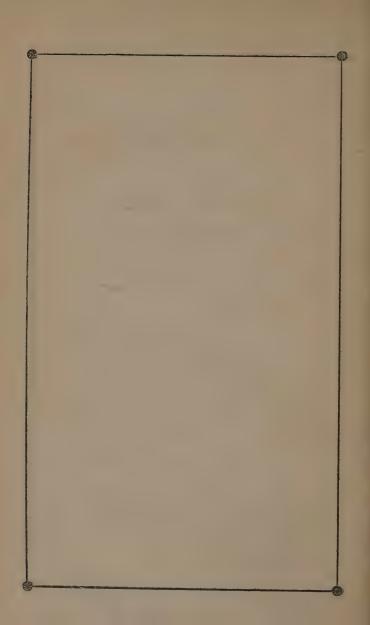
Worthy song from earnest soul!

Hold, in high poetic duty,

Truest Truth the fairest Beauty!

Pan, Pan is dead,

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